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ABSTRACT

Columbus (Georgia) College's Challenge Squared program consists of three 2-week enrichment day camps for gifted students in grades 5 through 10. In past years, students have worked with an artist to create local history murals and have written and produced video plays in cooperation with a media specialist. Most recently, students were involved in the reading and writing of time-warp fiction based on events from local history. In the second week of the program, students wrote the episodic novel, "Crisis at the Clock Tower," which took its name from a tower built on campus in 1991 and which contains a time capsule scheduled to be opened in the year 2058 in conjunction with the institution's centennial. The time-travel theme was reinforced with day trips to areas of regional historical interest. After students read one of four time-warp novels, local history experts from the college faculty visited the class. Next, the students devoted themselves to research into Columbus history. A computer-based writing lab simplified the writing process. Challenge Squared's use of time travel opened the eyes of talented eighth and ninth grade students to the past and to a future which they may help to shape and enabled them to think of time in novel ways. In his book, "A Brief History of Time" (1988) Stephen Hawking asked: Where does the difference between past and future come from? Why do we remember the past but not the future? Through time-warp fiction, today's students may be challenged with such questions. In time, they may find the answers. (The student-composed novel, "Crisis at the Clock Tower," is attached.) (SG)

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Challenging the Future Through Young Adult Literature, Fiction Writing, and Local History

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National Council of Teachers of English
Seattle, Washington
November, 1991

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> What do we know about the universe, and how do we know it? Where did the universe come from, and where is it going? Did the universe have a beginning, and if so, what happened before then? What is the nature of time? Will it ever come to an end?
>
> . . . Only time (whatever that is) will tell.
>
> Stephen W. Hawking
> A Brief History of Time (1988)

Time travel (whatever that is) provided a thematic motif for Columbus College's Challenge Squared program this past summer. Challenge, three two-week enrichment daycamps for gifted young people in grades 5-10, has since 1983 been an excellent setting in which to pilot innovative curriculum materials. Challenge Squared serves the "old kids" in the program, the rising ninth and tenth graders, of whom there were thirty-five in 1991.

Stimulated by the classroom possibilities of time-warp fiction elaborated by Hugh Agee and Janet Cotter (1990), Challenge Squared teachers planned three classes which would touch in one way or another on time and time travel. In "Art Futurescapes," students worked with artist/teacher Faith Birkhead to create brick murals depicting scenes from local history which, before long, will be incorporated into a riverfront redevelopment project along the Chattahoochee in Columbus. In "Video Workshop," Ft. Benning media specialist Cindy Givens taught students how to script, record, and edit original video plays with a time-warp twist. Finally, English teacher Sarah Mitchell's "Back and Forth to and From the Future" involved students in both

reading and writing time-warp fiction based on events drawn from local Columbus history. In the second week of "Back and Forth," students wrote Crisis at the Clock Tower, an episodic novel close to 20,000 words in length set, initially, in 2058, at the centennial celebration of Columbus College.

Contexts: Challenge Squared and Columbus College

Before describing these classes in greater detail, particularly "Back and Forth to and From the Future," let me put them in the broader context of what was going on with not only Challenge but Columbus College this past summer.

First, a bit more about Challenge Squared. Its students attend three classes daily, each an hour and a half long. For its 1991 program, classes were selected from six options, three of which ("Casino Math," "We Could Make Beautiful Music Together," and "The Mideast: What Happened and Why?") did not address the time-travel theme other than incidentally. Thus, a few Challenge Squared students were enrolled in no time-travel classes, most probably took one or perhaps two, and a few took all three. Challenge Squared classes are small; twelve were enrolled in "Back and Forth to and From the Future."

For the past year, time has been on the mind of Columbus College faculty and students. A clock tower, dedicated to the institution's first president, was built during 1991. The construction site is adjacent to the building which housed most Challenge Squared classes. As well, campus attention focused on a time capsule placed in the base of the new clock tower at its dedication in September. The capsule will be opened in 2058 in

conjunction with the institution's centennial. Thus, thinking of both the past and future was natural on campus for the past year, and Challenge Squared adolescents, passing by the rapidly rising Whitley Clock Tower two or three times a day, were quick to pick up on the idea.

Reinforcing the Theme: The Challenge Squared Daytrip

We were able to reinforce the time travel theme in the Challenge Squared daytrip, which occupied one of the ten weekdays of the program. This year we called the trip "Somewhere in Time" and built our itinerary around Georgia's past and future.

We began the day at FDR's Little White House in Warm Springs, thirty miles northeast of Columbus, where Columbus College professor Tom Wentland greeted us at the Bump Gate and addressed us in the persona of a wheelchair-bound Franklin Roosevelt himself. (President Roosevelt used the Bump Gate, which could withstand a solid bump from his automobile, to drive into his retreat. The gate was weighted so it would close behind him.) Wentland's skillful, carefully researched Roosevelt impression is well-known in West Central Georgia; the Warm Springs Foundation frequently uses his talents at FDR commemorative events during the year, especially in April, on the anniversary of Roosevelt's death.

From Warm Springs and the 1940's, it was a quick trip to the twenty-first century at our second stop, Shenandoah, an experimental facility operated by Georgia Power which affords visitors a hands-on look at solar energy technology in the Southeast. From Shenandoah, it is another forty

miles along I-85 into Atlanta, a city often accused of ignoring its past while rushing headlong toward tomorrow.

In the city, our first stop was the construction site of Number One Peachtree Center and the offices of its visionary architect, John Portman. Here, through models and computer simulation, Challenge Squared participants and teachers learned about the design and construction of the sixty-plus story skyscraper, the centerpiece of Portman's Peachtree Center, set to open in mid-1992. Portman's staff, in effect, rolled out the red carpet for Challenge Squared, giving the group essentially the same presentation they do for well-heeled prospective tenants of the office complex.

It is just short hop across I-75/85 from Peachtree Center to Georgia Tech, our next stop. Here, with the national co-champion Yellow Jackets' football team practicing in the background, Challenge Squared students viewed the same state-of-the-art multimedia presentation which, last fall, led the International Olympic Committee to select Atlanta as host for the 1996 summer games. The interactive presentation is based on a time-warp premise of sorts, inasmuch as it welcomes viewers and international visitors to Atlanta and the Olympic Village as if it were already 1996, as if special facilities were in place, as if the games were about to begin.

Is there more? Yes. After dinner at Underground, Atlanta's festival marketplace built among shops and offices which, in the late nineteenth century, were left all but forgotten below street level, Challenge Squared teens and chaperones headed for a Braves' game, billed in their itinerary as a "preview of the 1991 World Series." Little did we know how prophetic a claim this would turn out to be.

"Futurescapes" and "Video Workshop"

Challenge Squared used the time travel theme somewhat less with "Futurescapes" and "Video Workshop" than I had hoped. Initially, the art class was to have painted a mural which would reflect both the city's history and its future. Faith Birkhead's idea for the class was different and novel, though, and within her specialty, which is three-dimensional art, not painting. With the cooperation of local architects and Bickerstaff Clay Products, a local brickyard, she and her students rendered, brick by brick, two murals which, as noted previously, will one day be part of a redeveloped Columbus riverfront. Faith identified two scenes from Columbus's history, a riverboat alongside a cotton dock and a wooden bridge spanning the Chattahoochee which was designed by Horace King, a freedman, in the late nineteenth century. (King, by the way, has been the subject of considerable interest among local historians.) These scenes were then transferred to a four-by-six feet section of green, unfired bricks. Each student in the two "Futurescapes" classes was responsible for transferring and carving out a twelve-by-fifteen inch section of the scene, a process calling for considerable teamwork.

In "Video Workshop," we at first hoped that students might take stories written for "Back and Forth to and From the Future," prepare a video script, and produce them. This was naive on my part, which Cindy Givens and I figured out early in the process of planning the class. Obviously, "Back and Forth to and From the Future" students wouldn't finish anything soon enough for the video class to work with in Challenge Squared's two weeks, so the original idea was dropped. Instead, students in Cindy's classes were divided

into working groups of four or five students which, while encouraged to develop scripts involving time travel, were free to come up with their own ideas. As a result, only two of the four video dramas involved time travel; each of these used a dream as a device to move characters both to other times and, at the story's climax, back to the present.

"Back and Forth to and From the Future"

Sarah Mitchell agreed to teach "Back and Forth to and From the Future" late in 1990. In our first planning session, I explained only that the class should involve both reading and writing time-warp fiction, probably in that order, and that the stories might as well be set in Columbus, which the kids knew well from first-hand experience. Knowing of Sarah's creativity, I thought this would be enough. Just give her some broad guidelines to work with, I knew from prior experience; then get out of her way. I was right.

During the winter months, Sarah acquainted herself with current time-warp novels, particularly YA titles which she believed would engage teenagers quickly and which they might finish quickly. She selected four for small group reading in "Back and Forth to and From the Future": Jane Yolen's The Devil's Arithmetic (1988), Belinda Hurmence's A Girl Called Boy (1982), Jill Paton Walsh's A Chance Child (1978), and A Tie to the Past, by David Wiseman (1989).

These four novels may or may not be among the best of time-warp fiction for young adults, but they served Sarah's purposes well. Each author uses time travel as a sometimes more, sometimes less thinly veiled device to propel adolescent characters (and readers) into strange historical

settings, thus providing insight into an issue, situation, or event of significance. Jane Yolen's focus is the Holocaust, while Hurmence's novel deals with slavery in the 1850's. Set in England, Walsh's A Chance Child is an eye opener about child labor practices early in the industrial revolution. A Tie to the Past, finally, is an time-warp account of the women's suffrage movement which uses the prison journals of Gladys Mayhew as their historical basis.

Since "Back and Forth to and From the Future" would be a nine-day class, students were assigned one of the four novels to read before its first meeting. For the first two days, the nature of time, how it is handled in time-warp fiction, and these specific works were discussed in detail. The Devil's Arithmetic and A Chance Child struck a strong chord with the group; A Tie to the Past was the least well-received title, perhaps due to its more juvenile flavor.

On the third day, the class was visited by two Columbus College history professors, John Lupold and Craig Lloyd. John is a specialist in Southern and local history, while Craig directs the College's Schwob Library Archives, an extensive collection of photos, letters, newspapers, and other materials from early Columbus. At Sarah Mitchell's request, Lupold and Lloyd provided vivid accounts of early Columbus, dealing in particular with race relations, with the labor movement and life in the mills, with late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century schooling, and with the notorious role Phenix City, Alabama, played as Sin City in the region during the forties and fifties.

In this session, Challenge Squared students learned, among other things, how blues great Ma Rainey and America's

first black aviator, Eugene Bullard, a member of World War I's Lafayette Escadrille, grew up in Columbus but never found acceptance in their hometown. They learned about the lynching of T. Z. McElhany, a black boy their own age, and about the courageous role played by journalist Julian Harris, who took on the Ku Klux Klan in the late twenties and earned a Pulitzer in the process. And they read accounts of life in the cotton mills in the early part of this century, where barefooted children went to work along their parents, called "lint heads" because of the cotton lint that always covered them and, in the form of brown lung disease, guaranteed poor health and, too often, an early death. And they learned of Ma Beachie's and other booming red-light district houses across the river in Phenix City, where GI's from Fort Benning went to gamble and whore and sometimes ended up dead in the Chattahoochee.

Thus immersed in local history, students were ready to spend the fourth and fifth days of "Back and Forth to and From the Future" in library and archival research. Sarah drew up a list of perhaps twenty milestone events in the city's history which her Challenge Squared students could choose from for detailed study. Her list included events ranging from Edwin Booth's performance of Hamlet in the Springer Opera House in 1876 to a bloody union rally outside the mills in 1919, and most recently, to ugly accounts of Carlton Gary, Columbus's stocking strangler, who murdered six elderly women in 1973-1974. Research materials on these subjects were assembled in part by Craig Lloyd.

Each student, either solo or with a partner, investigated one event, using original news reports, letters, and other first-hand accounts. These events would

be the focus of the class's episodic time-warp novel, to be written in the coming week.

I would like to be able to say that the ingenious frame for Crisis at the Clock Tower was the product of adolescent thought and creativity, but this was not the case. Sarah tells me that, sometime during the first week of the class, she invited the kids to devise such a frame, a scheme for bringing together the various eras and events in local history that, collectively, would comprise the novel. Given both time constraints and the students' tendency to imitate Michael Fox's popular films, though, she went ahead and shared with them her own idea, a plot set in the not-too-distant future in which the descendants of Challenge Squared authors would be the protagonists. The rising clock tower and its time capsule, scheduled to be opened at the centennial of the College in 2058, provided an excellent (even obvious) setting in place and time for a starting point.

Students took to Sarah's concept enthusiastically, and they added two key elements, a "Frozen Brew" character and the Santa Maria, a time-travel spaceship with an obvious tie-in to the city's namesake. The "Frozen Brew" is none other than I, Challenge Squared director, whom the kids knew well after two or three years in the program, most of them, or because I spent a good deal of time in their classes, either taking pictures or just listening. (In Chapter 1, I am described as a fellow "with a grin on his face and . . . a camera strapped around his neck.") In any event, they determined that, in the novel, old Dr. Brewbaker decided in his declining years that he loved Columbus College so much that, rather that meet his maker in the traditional fashion,

he chose to be frozen cryogenically. Thus, in 2058, he could be thawed out and participate in the centennial.

Crisis at the Clock Tower begins, then, at this event, which draws a throng to the campus. Monikka Mann, who wrote the first chapter, is now the ageing president of the college. Eight descendants of 1991's Challenge Squared program, each in period costume, will be on the program and make a short speech about an artifact taken from the time capsule: a lantern from the Chattahoochee riverboat "Rebecca Everyingham," which burned in 1885; William Pemberton's original formula for Coca Cola; the cape Edwin Booth wore when he played Hamlet; a gold bobbin from the Swift cotton mills; and so on. At high noon the speeches begin, but -- due to malfunctions in the clock's new atomic power system -- objects from the time capsule begin to disappear one by one until all have vanished.

At the same time, the Frozen Brew thaws, a bit ahead of schedule. He recognizes, first, that the historic objects have been "catapulted back to their . . . place in Columbus's history" and, second, that both the past and present are in jeopardy of permanent alteration unless each item is retrieved and returned to the present (2058). Through means only the Frozen Brew grasps, each teenager is transported back in time with the mission of recovering his or her artifact and bring it back.

Chapter one of Crisis at the Clock Tower concludes with these words: "The journey had begun."

At this point, I'll resist the temptation of turning this into a book report, NCTE-style. Instead, I invite you to read Crisis at the Clock Tower in its entirety if the history of Columbus, Georgia, interests you. For all its

adolescent quality, I found it highly informative and, yes, a good read to boot. Because of the careful research which forms the basis for each episode, it serves up local history in a engaging format -- so engaging, in fact, that it has real potential for use in Columbus schools to supplement textbook accounts of Georgia history, which is part of the eighth grade curriculum.

Better than some of the others, Christie Wilson's PG-13 chapter, "Dealing With a Deck of Marked Cards," illustrates my point:

> She noticed people strolling by staring at her in her old vintage clothing. She was wearing a revealing black sequin dancing . . . from that time. It was an actual dress of a "B-girl," slang for a bar girl. Kaegan closed her eyes and thought June 1, 1954. She envisioned the nightclub that she had seen so many pictures and clippings of before. She imagined the voices of the G.I.'s crossing the bridge, looking for a good time.
>
> "Kaegan, girl, if Tanner comes out and sees you just standing here, you'll end up in the river. C'mon, girl, get back in the club," a thick Southern voice drawled.
>
> Kaegan turned around to see a bleach-blond haired girl with full rich red lips and too much eye makeup. She wore a dress similar to hers, except hers was red.
>
> "Who are you?" Kaegan asked.
>
> "Ooooh, girl. Have you been drinkin' again? You know the rules, girl. What has been the matta wi' chou lately? Jist ta humor ya, I'll tell ya.

Mah name is Sandie Caldwell. Lawd, girl, if you don't git straight, I jist don't know. I know ya ain't but jist a teenager, but you been in the business for about two yea's," Sandie said.

"I know, Sandie. I was just in a daze. It happens sometimes, even to the best of us," Kaegan said, thinking of an accurate rebuttal.

"That's the Kaegan I know," Sandie said smiling. "Thatta girl. C'mon, the soldiers will be in soon. Gotta get ready." Sandie and Kaegan started into The Poppy Club. . . . As they walked in, a robust, balding man approached them.

"Hello, Beautiful," he said stroking Kaegan's shoulder. Kaegan pulled back. " What's the matter, Kae, you never pulled back before. You ain't starting to get shy on me, are you?"

Christie, who has a remarkable ear for Columbus/Phenix City speech patterns, builds an engaging character in Kaegan, a reluctant B-girl for twenty-four hours in spite of her moralistic tone in Chapter 1.

In their co-authored episode, Regina Dotson and Rebecca Shepard bring working conditions in the mills to life:

Dirty workers strolled around the mill as dinner toters brought them food. Alexis looked on in awe as a child bleeding from the hand took advantage of the break and ate a sandwich.

"How can they stand this?" she muttered under her breath. "Twelve hours of work with only a half an hour break and they still come back every day."

"What did you say?" said a thin, stringy haired girl near the bench.

"I didn't notice you. I was just talking to myself," answered Alexis.

"Oh," said the girl. "Do you work here? I've never seen you before. By the way, my name is Sara, what's your's?"

"Alexis. And no, I don't work here. I'm from out of town."

To say the least.

Conclusions and Implications

Challenge Squared's use of time travel -- whether through visiting FDR at his Little White House in Warm Springs, reading quality young adult fiction, or creating the carefully researched yet imaginative Crisis at the Clock Tower -- paid off handsomely. For talented eight- and ninth- grade students, it opened eyes to the past and to a future world which they, if they choose well, will shape.

"Back and Forth to and From the Future" would have been a better class had it lasted a third week. Challenge Squared classes meet for an hour and a half and are far less subject to interruptions than a typical school. Curriculum planners considering adapting and using the idea would do well to allow four weeks, possible even more, to the unit.

It goes without saying that a computer-based writing lab, which Sarah Mitchell's students used for four class days, was invaluable to the class. The project is certainly possible without wordprocessing, but it would be more complicated and less efficient. Publishing the class novel would have been tedious.

Especially with sophisticated students, a common reading such as Wells The Time Machine would have been

desirable. L'Engle's A Wrinkle in Time is a child and adolescent classic and always stimulating, but it is closer to fantasy than science fiction and less useful given the history emphasis of "Back and Forth From and to the Future."

In non-technical language, Stephen J. Hawking has enabled us to conceive of time in novel ways. He writes that "there can be no important difference between the forward and backward directions of imaginary time. On the other hand, when we look at 'real' time, there's a very big difference between the forward and backward directions, as we all know. Where does this difference between the past and the future come from? Why do we remember the past but not the future?"

Through time-warp fiction -- through classes like "Back and Forth From and to the Future" -- today's teens may be challenged with these questions. In time (whatever that is), they may find the answers.

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CRISIS AT THE CLOCK TOWER --

HOW A FROZEN BREW
AND
EIGHT TIME TRAVELLERS RESCUED
COLUMBUS'S PAST FROM
ATOMIC DESTRUCTION

Written and Produced by Challenge^2

Columbus College School of Education

Columbus, Georgia 31993

August, 1991

A NOTE TO READERS

Crisis at the Clock Tower was written by twelve talented eighth and ninth-grade teenagers as part of an enrichment course at Columbus College (Georgia) in the summer of 1991. Through a two-week class called "Back and Forth to and From the Future," these students read adolescent novels which featured time travel, studied significant events in local history, and, for the last several days, created this inventive story of time travel.

Sarah Mitchell, a Columbus High School English teacher, taught "Back and Forth to and From the Future." Jim Brewbaker, a Columbus College professor and Director of Challenge Squared, came up with the basic idea for the class. Sarah and Jim edited and spell-checked the manuscript. Without question, it was Sarah and her students -- Amanda, Tuck, Lauren, Monikka, Christie, Adam, Jeff, Andy, Ted, Shannon, Regina, and Becca -- that made the project work.

For further information, call Jim Brewbaker at [404] 568-2255.

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Chapter One:

The Melting of the Brew

"Why in the world were we chosen for this stupid job?" said an impatient Alexis. "I hate doing speeches, especially in front of other people."

"Well, Alexis, at least your speech doesn't have you being a immoral person back in the times of 'Sin City,'" complained Kaegan.

The girls were less than enthusiastic about the speeches they would have to give at the centennial celebration of Columbus College, now known as the University of Georgia at Columbus. They and the other grandchildren of the Challenge Squared Class of 1991 were going to each speak about an object out of the time capsule buried at the original dedication of the Whitley Clock Tower.

"Would both of you please stop complaining. It wouldn't be that bad if you only looked at it in the right perspective," Spencer replied in a perfect Ms. West voice. Ms. West was one of the counselors in 1991, and she was now organizing the students' part in the centennial celebration. "And if I have to do it y'all have to do it, too."

At that very moment, the costume mistress from the Springer Opera House arrived with authentic period costumes for each person to wear during their speeches. Each of the objects was symbolic of a time in Columbus history. The artifacts ranged from a stocking from the 1970's to a cape worn by Edwin Booth at the Springer.

Tracy, John, James, Casey and Isabelle walked up a few moments later and joined the others for rehearsal. The celebration was a few hours away and this was the only and final dress rehearsal before the "real thing."

They had a hard time maneuvering around a big metal case on the middle of the speaker's dais. When Isabelle accidentally brushed up against the side of it, she jumped back and bumped into John.

"What was that for, Isabelle?" he said.

"That thing was freezing cold; when I touched it, a chill shot through my whole body. Look, see the goosebumps on my arm. What's in there anyway? An iceberg?"

"Actually a frozen body," James replied.

"James Burns, you are the biggest liar on God's Green Earth. There is not a frozen body in there. That kind of stuff never happens in a dull place like Columbus, only in a megalopolis like Vidalia, where they created the world's first freeze-dried onion!" Tracy yelled.

"Tracy, don't use the Lord's name in vain. That's a sin," said Kaegan.

"Oh, Kaegan, please. You're always getting on everyone's nerves with all that holy and religious garbage. No one is perfect and good except for you of course," retaliated Tracy.

"All right, Tracy, just leave her alone. The Constitution guarantees her the right to her own opinions, even if they sometimes get on everyone else's nerves. Anyway, we have to get a move on or we're going to be late and Ms. West will be breathing down our throats," commented John.

"Would all of you just hush up," a disgruntled Casey Walker added. "We have to hurry up so that I can show all of you bums how great my speech is compared to y'all's."

When they had finally walked across the campus to the Clock Tower, Ms. West was there waiting for them. She was not angry about them being late, but she did have a special guest for them to meet.

"Kids, this is Dr. Yusef Battle. He was the other 1991 Challenge Squared counselor. Now he is the head of the drama department at the university and

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the emcee of today's festivities. Say hello, young people."

"Hello, Dr. Battle."

"I hope that you all are ready for today. This is a very important occasion not only for the university, but for your grandparents and all of Columbus as well."

"Dr. Battle," began Isabelle. "Dr. Battle, is there really a dead body in that metal thing over there?"

"Isabelle Hanes, isn't it?" he asked.

"Yes that's me," she said, her voice trembling. "I normally don't ask questions that far fetched but someone told me that there really was one inside of that thing."

"Well, kids, there isn't a dead body inside of there, but there is a body inside of there."

A sigh of surprise is heard from all of them. There really was a body inside of there but not a dead one.

"Many years ago," began Dr. Battle," around the year 2025, Dr. James Brewbaker was cryogenically frozen to be preserved until the opening of the Challenge time capsule and to see the grandchildren of the original Challenge Squared students. Today, after y'all present your speeches, he is going to be revived."

"Hey, really cool dudes, a frozen Brew!" yelled Spencer. "How are they going to thaw him out, pop him in the microwave on defrost?"

"Spencer Norwood,Jr., that was not a very proper thing to say. Young man, I think that we will need to work some manners when you get back to school," commented Ms. West. "This is not something that is a rare occurrence in this day and age, only here in Columbus. Hopefully with all of the publicity of this occasion, we can get some more modern technology at the university and bring Columbus up to par with the rest of the state. At any rate, children, go get into your costumes so that we can get this rehearsal started. Only a few more hours until show time."

After that, the morning went rather smoothly. The costumes fit perfectly and the speeches went really well during rehearsal. The amount of research the descendants had undertaken really showed in the smooth, easy flow of words and ideas. Dr. Battle felt confident that the audience would be in for an interesting presentation.

When everyone was ready to leave, the workers were just putting the finishing touches on the Clock Tower. The conversion from regular electricity to atomics was one of the bigger highlights of the centennial celebration. After the ceremony, the clock was going to rocket timekeeping in Columbus into the 22nd century.

The technicians for the job were having to be teleported in from the capital, Vidalia. Even more specialists were being "teled" in from the capital to supervise the defrosting of the "Frozen Brew," making this one of the biggest events to happen in Columbus in a very long time.

By the time that noon rolled around, the seating space around the Clock Tower was almost filled to capacity, but people were still pouring out of the Davidson Student Complex after the buffet luncheon. This was a very special lunch because the Food Thought Teleporter was being used for the first time.

The FTT was able to create whatever food that the user wanted by merely reading that person's thoughts. The guests were impressed by the speed and efficiency of the FTT. After about five minutes, the crowd was gathered in full force for the presentations to begin.

The objects were handsomely arrayed on tables in front of the speakers. There was a lantern from the steamboat "Rebecca," the original formula for Coca-Cola torn from Pemberton's diary, a cape used by Edwin

Booth in Hamlet, a golden bobbin from Columbus' mill days, the gun used to kill T.Z McElhaney, Julian Harris' Pulitzer Prize, a deck of marked cards from Ma Beachie's house of ill repute and a stocking used by Carlton Gary in the infamous "Stocking Strangler" murders.

Each grandchild was seated on the dais behind the object he or she was responsible for explaining. All of them were very nervous because this was a very important event. They were even more worried when they saw the head technician for the clock's atomic crossover speak in very hushed, hurried tones to Dr. Battle. A worried furrow was woven into both men's brows.

Everyone except for Alexis -- she had a deep gut feeling that maybe the afternoon would not go off without a hitch -- had assumed that nothing would go wrong. Alexis had passed the feeling off as just butterflies in her stomach or an anxiety attack.

"Alexis, is something the matter? You look as white as a sheet," asked Isabelle.

"No nothing's wrong, and besides, you're the one who is always so nervous and worried and you're checking on me. What a joke!"

"Well, I guess you might be right about that. I just have a strange feeling that something just isn't going to go right. I'm just so nervous all of a sudden. Everything is going to be all right, right? I hope I don't mess up my speech making everyone get angry at me and me end up getting embarrassed. Gosh, what will I do?"

"Belle, don't worry about it. It will all be okay. I promise. Nothing will go wrong. I promise. Your speech will go well and yours will be the best one of all, trust me," Alexis replied giving Isabelle's hand a gentle squeeze to reassure her, while at the same time, calming her own fears.

There was a clump of people gathered around the case containing the Frozen Brew. They all had on white lab coats and carried clip boards. After a while, they all stood back while a selected few stood the Metal monolith on end and partially removed the case, revealing Dr. Brewbaker from the waist up.

He looked very life-like indeed. To those few there who had previously known him, Dr. B looked just the same. He had a grin on his face and as always, a camera strapped around his neck. In fact, the only thing that would have clued an observer in that he had not been merely sleeping was that his skin was very pale and his hair was completely gray.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to the campus of the University of Georgia at Columbus," said Dr. Monikka Mann who had been the president of UGC for the past twenty years and would be retiring after this ceremony.

The crowd applauded.

"This afternoon we have a very special program planned for all of you. But now to introduce the one in charge of this special program, our very own Dr. Yusef Battle."

Again, the crowd applauded.

"Welcome again to our centennial celebration," said Dr. Battle. "We have some very interesting activities planned for all of you here today. They include the revival of Dr. Jim Brewbaker, a presentation by the grandchildren of the Challenge Squared participants of 1991 who buried the now famous time capsule, and the activation of the new atomic-powered Whitley Clock Tower."

The crowd cheered.

"But now to kick off the program, we have some speeches prepared by those very special kids. Kids, would you all stand up when you name is called. In order of appearance, John Fowler, James Burns, Tracy Brown, Alexis Burnham, Spencer Norwood Jr., Casey Walker, Kaegan Ashmore and Isabelle Hanes. These young men and women have worked

very hard on preparing these speeches today to inform you about Columbus' past. Let's give them a warm UGC welcome."

Again the crowd cheered.

James was the first one up. As he was rising out of his seat, the clock stuck noon and something went wrong. Pemberton's coke formula just flickered and disappeared. James didn't know what to do so he just stood there in awe just like everyone else.

John, being a quick thinker, decided to jump up and start right into his speech but his object disappeared on the second bong of the clock. Tracy wanted to go ahead and get hers over with so she rose and started with hers but the cape vanished on the third bong of the clock.

This mysterious pattern continued on until all eight artifacts were gone; eight students were standing in costume waiting for the next move. No one knew what was going on except for one man that no one even knew was there.

At the same time that the atomics in the clock were malfunctioning and causing the objects to somehow disappear, they were also causing a change to occur inside Brewbaker's metal case. The particles were slowly warming and speeding up inside Dr. Brewbaker's body causing, slowly but surely, the thawing of the Frozen Brew. He was totally amazed that it was time for him to return to the land of the living because to him hardly any time had elapsed.

While his body was frozen, his mind had been set free to wander through time... not only to wander, but to become one with the fluidity of the little understood thing that man labels as Time. To Dr. Brewbaker, Time could no longer be categorized as past, present or future. Even though his body had been frozen for over 25 years, his mind did not see it that way. He had been a part of Time; he was one with it.

"Boys and Girls," he said. "Follow me."

For no reason, all eight of them got up and did as he said. They knew not why they had to go, but they knew that they had to go. It was for some very important reason, a higher cause they felt compelled to answer. Little did they know that life as they knew it here in Columbus depended on what they did next.

Dr. Brewbaker followed landmarks and buildings that had been there before and buildings and things that had been built later but somehow he knew what they were. He and his young charges finally stopped in front of what used to be Dr. Brewbaker's old office.

"Children," he began,"children, what I have to tell you now may sound really farfetched, but it I promise you that it is totally true. The atomic energy source in the Clock Tower malfunctioned causing the artifacts from the time capsule to be catapulted back to their proper times in Columbus' history. But there is one problem: the energy source in the clock has also altered the past as we know it."

"What do you mean, 'altered the past as we know it'?" an unbelieving Casey questioned. "This is a bunch of crap. How do you know this? You've been dead for over 25 years. You're just a frozen Brew who just defrosted. Maybe your mind just go screwed up or is suffering from frostbite."

"Like I said, it is farfetched, but you must believe me. I am telling the truth. And when I said that it altered the past, I mean that if the artifacts aren't recovered in time, the entire past of Columbus will disappear."

"But that's impossible, time just can't disappear, can it?"a befuddled Isabelle asked. "What will happen if the past just vanishes? Will we all die? What will happen to us? I'm too young to die, too young to die. I

don't want to die." - Isabelle finished those last lines in tears. Alexis grabbed her in a big hug.

"Calm down, Belle. Nothing will happen to you, I promise."

"You said that before and then this happened. What can I do, who can I believe? Dr. Brewbaker or you? I just don't know."

All eight of them turned toward Dr. Brewbaker. They looked at him for the answer but did not get the one that they wanted.

"Suppose that what you say is true," James suggested. "Suppose all these things are really gone and that what you say is really going to happen. How long do we have before the past is gone? What is the worst case scenario?"

"We have approximately 24 hours to complete this mission. This means that you must have your object and be back here within one day. You eight must go into the past because you have on the costumes and you have done the research on the time period. You are the only ones who can do it; please don't let me down. Otherwise, we all are doomed."

The kids huddled together and talked it over.

"I don't know... should we believe him?"

"I can't believe that this could be true. He's just some old senile man. They always said he was a bit weird."

"Shut up, Casey. He sounded so convincing. And besides, what have we got to lose? Aren't you the one who is always saying how much you want an adventure... here's your chance."

They all agreed to trust Dr. Brewbaker and to listen to his plan for saving the past for the future of Columbus.

"We need a volunteer to go first," he said. "Would one of you guys like to try it? All you have to do is go to the general area where your object would have been and concentrate on the date and the object, the date and the object. Remember, you must be back in 24 hours...our time...with your object. Those of you travelling to a place near downtown will have to meet at the Church of St. Philip and St. John to be picked up. I'll explain the pick-up sites for you other three individually."

"How will we find that church?" John asked.

"It will be on the south side of 12th street between 13th and 14th Avenues. By the way, John, I think that you had the first item on the list so you should be the one to go first. You have to go to the riverfront and focus on the time and object. All of you must also get to your places and think about the time and object. Oh, you must remember to keep an eye on your watches because time in the past will move differently from time now. Get a move on."

They all went with John to the riverside and he repeated the time and object until he did indeed disappear as the Frozen Brew had promised. The others hastily headed out to find their own places, feeling more confident now that the Frozen Brew truly did possess knowledge beyond the limits of Time as the world had always viewed it.

"Godspeed and good luck!" Dr. Brewbaker shouted.

The journey had begun.

Chapter 2:

Burning Brighter than a Lantern

John looked at the hydroplane dock as the rest of the group faded out of sight. Behind them, the Chattahoochee cleared, deepened, widened. Trees became greener and grass grew taller. Above the trees, he could see a plume of black smoke curling skyward, and there was the faint sound of paddles slapping against the water. A river-boat!

The name "Rebecca Everingham" was painted on both the wheelhouse and on the stern, directly in front of the big thirteen foot paddlewheel, which John guessed was rotating once every three seconds. Perhaps the lantern would be on board this ship. He scrambled down the hill to meet it.

As he neared the dock, half a dozen burly black stevedores piled out to load the huge bales of cotton that had been waiting on the wooden platform. On deck, two men were arguing about something. John dropped back to listen.

"I'm tellin' ye, Nelson," one was growling in a low Southern drawl. "There's no way we're gone take this here load of cott'n!"

"And why not?" Nelson asked calmly. His liquid voice reminded John of cold ferraplastic.

"You know just as good as I do, Nelson. We take on a load a cott'n that's already been burnt, we burn down too."

"Put a lid on it, Long. Do you see any flames anywhere near those bales?"

"Naw, but..."

"But nothing, Long. We take this load to Appalachicola, Mister Wadley takes in the payment and gives it to us. To <u>you</u>, Long. Do you want a salary?"

"Shore, but..."

"Haven't I already told you? But nothing. We're taking that cotton to Appalachicola and that's the end of it. Now go on over there and help load it, or I'll make sure you don't <u>get</u> a salary!"

Long slunk away, and John walked up to Nelson. "Excuse me, sir, are you the captain of this boat?"

"Captain Whiteside, Captain Lapham, or Captain Tom?"

"Who's in charge?"

Nelson glared at him. John was secretly glad that he was taller than Nelson. If it hadn't been for the fact that the people in 1884 were shorter than those in 2058, he might well have given up then and there. Practically anybody would after being glared into a manhole cover.

After a full minute of close scrutiny, Nelson grunted, "Captain Whiteside's in the wheelhouse."

John opened his mouth to ask another question, but Nelson's eternally contorted face made him think better of it, and instead he said simply, "Thanks."

Nelson had said that Captain Whiteside was in the wheelhouse. That would be on the top of the ship, two flights up from deck level. John crossed the plush green carpeting to a graceful staircase in the corner of the ballroom.

He found Captain Whiteside sitting in a chair going over a piece of paper that looked to be a map.

"Excuse me, sir..."

The captain raised his head. His expression was more gentle than that of Nelson, but no less business like. "I'm afraid we can't take on any stowaways, we're already sailing low."

"I'm willing to work," John pleaded.

"I am truly sorry, but I don't have the authority to hire more hands at this stage in the trip."

"I'll do it for free," begged John. "Please, sir, this is very important to me."

Captain Whiteside's ruddy eyebrows twitched noticeably. "You realize that it will be hard work, harder than you've ever done." The question was really more of a statement, and two gray-blue eyes focused intently on the boy in front of them.

A "Yes, sir" was all it took, and John was hired.

Thirty minutes later, John was making beds and sweeping carpets. It was hardly what he had expected, but he realized that, after having loaded cotton for fifteen minutes, the captain really had no use for him and was really going out of his way to help.

Above him, a bell tolled eight times. John had read enough before hand to know that meant that it was two in the afternoon and that his shift was up for four hours. John wisely took a nap until two bells, about three o'clock. He reached out and tapped a nearby crewman, who groggily, then threateningly protested.

"If you please, sir, where could I find a lantern?" John implored.

"I don't please," was the reply, and the mate rolled over and was snoring in no time.

John looked around. A lanky sailor with a week's worth of beard was gazing at a half-empty checkerboard in the corner. John tried asking him.

"Why don't you try in the bow? That's where it's been for four years." In the moment before he turned, John could see that the young man had a forlorn look on his face, as if the world were about to end and he didn't much care.

John crept out of the cabin, so as not to wake the rest of the crew, then made his way to the front of the boat. This turned out to be a challenge, as at least twenty people were crowded near it. When he did break through, all he saw was a big searchlight. Just to the right of it, a middle-aged man was surveying the water ahead.

"Sir, could you tell me where the lanterns are?"

Turning around, the bearded man related, "Oh yes, hello! I had heard that the 'Everingham' had acquired a new crew member. You've never done this sort of work before, have you? I can tell just by looking at you. But you'll learn, though, you'll learn. Especially on a steamer such as the 'Rebecca.' The pride of the Central Line of Columbus, Georgia."

"But I haven't even introduced myself yet. You must be terribly bored with me. Captain Tom Whiteside, at your service. You look like a respectable chap. Call me Captain Tom, everyone does. Now what brings you up here to the stem of this grand steamboat?"

"If you please, sir, could you tell me where the lanterns are kept?"

"Oh yes, of course I <u>could.</u> The question is, <u>will</u> I? You'll find them in the hold, directly on the left. Now what would you be needing a lantern for in the middle of the day? I remember once, '58 it was, yes, the spring of '58. I was..."

John left to go below deck.

In the musty darkness of the hold, John needed as much time to breath as he did to see. He could faintly smell burning. This he dismissed as the burned cargo from the other riverboat.

On the left John could make ot the outline of a cabinet of lanterns. They were all carefully polished, but one gleamed brighter than the others. Turning it slowly, he could make out the numbers "1885." Eighteen eighty-five, realized an elated John, hadn't even come yet! This was the lantern!

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Now all he had to do was get off the boat. For now, he could get the sleep that he so suddenly needed. There would be another two and a half hours until his next shift. That would be enough.

Twelve hours later, a groggy John was mopping the deck when four bells sounded. Wind whistled through the trees and a few persistent bugs kept up their chirping. The sternwheel was gently chopping the rushing, sometimes burbling water, and above it all, a rustling from below. Dark clouds covered the sky from the moon down to the twin smokestacks and to the deck.

John was so tired that for a moment he thought nothing of a fire in the hold. Then he panicked. He raced to the rail, to the hatch, and finally up to the wheelhouse, where Captain Lapham, the pilot, stood guiding the ship. "Fire!" was the only word he could get out.

From then on all was confusion. Captain Lapham ran the ship aground to bring it closer to shore. The crew was working to wake passengers and get them ashore. John ran up to the door of a stateroom. Knocking loudly, he called, "Fire! Get your lifebelt on and come ashore! This is an emergency!"

A sleepy-eyed woman opened the door. "Hello," she said. "Is it morning already?"

"The 'Rebecca Everingham' is on fire, ma'am. You've got to get on your lifebelt as fast as you can and come on. It's under the bed."

The lady looked every bit as confused as John. "If this is a prank, young man, you'll be answering to the captain."

"No, ma'am, you've got to believe me!" John was beginning to get desperate. "It's an emergency!"

She huffed, "I'm going back to bed," and the door slammed in his face.

All John could do was hope she heard the commotion. After persuading two more people to abandon ship, the flames forced him to do so himself. At the riverbank, he continued to help by hauling people ashore.

Together they watched the grand riverboat being consumed in flames until nothing was left but a thin shell six inches high and filled with ashes and melted metal. Looking around, he saw the lady he had tried to reason with and almost everyone else on the riverbank, a muddy, distraught looking bunch, and not a smile among them, understandably.

Carey, the engineer, was just swimming up, but about four passengers and eight stevedores and deckhands were missing. John noticed that among them was the man who had been watching his checkerboard. From behind him, he heard a smug, "I told you so, Nelson."

Now with the ship out of his way, all John had to do was get back to the waterfront so Dr. Brewbaker could pick him up in the "Santa Maria." After a quick conversation with the navigator, he learned that the wreck of the "Everingham" had burned fifty miles below Columbus, and that the nearest roadway was half a mile to the east. This was John's only chance, as he had less than nine hours to get there. He set out immediately.

It was hard to keep a straight path through the maze of trunks and hummocks. It wasn't until five o'clock that he broke through the woods onto the road. No buggies. John collapsed into a dreamy slumber.

"Young man? Young man, you've simply got to move. James is in Columbus, and there's absolutely no way Will and I can move you." John woke up staring into the face of a lady, obviously dressed in her finest. Her two cameo earrings matched the large gold locket she had hanging around her

neck. She had on a calico print dress, and, as John noticed as he stumbled to his feet, a black purse and even blacker shoes.

On the front of the wooden carriage sat a boy of about twelve, holding in his hands the reins for the two mares. The door was standing open to reveal plush maroon upholstery and a white parasol.

"Are you going to Columbus?" John asked as she helped him up.

"Why, yes, of course, didn't I just say so?"

"I've got to get there by one o'clock today or... or..." John decided not to tell her, that there was no reason to worry her.

The lady was already stuffing him into the seat. "Oh you poor child. Of course we'll take you to Columbus. Just you sit right there and," she added. "I'll wake you up when we arrive."

Closing his eyes, John drifted off again into exhausted sleep. It seemed that only minutes had passed when he heard the woman say gently, "We're just about to arrive."

"Thanks, I can get out here." Refreshed by five hours of sleep, John thought that he would not only enjoy the two hundred yard walk, but also that it would be easier than trying to explain the appearance of the "Santa Maria" to the lady and her son, Will. He turned around to thank her again, but the carriage was already rumbling down the street.

Above him, John saw the "Santa Maria" materialize. "Perfect timing," he breathed with a sigh of relief, and started walking to the dock.

Chapter Three:

Pemberton's Plunder

As James exited the riverfront area, he boarded his private air monorail. He raced swiftly to the rail transfer building and thought about where he should head. Then, as he was being transferred from the eastbound to the westbound track, a delay occurred.

Though the monorail cars could travel both directions on one track, this delay was necessary because it has been shown to reduce accidents, even as rare as they are.

Racing along at a hypersonic speed, it took three seconds to commute to most anywhere in the Columbus metropolitan area. James, remembering the disappearance of the ledger page, finished his commute to Southern Columbus. Dr. Pemberton's home had been moved to keep it from becoming too frail.

Finally, arriving at the Pemberton home, James was greeted by the caretakers of this great Columbus landmark. In his costume, he entered the last building in Columbus still standing that had any association with Dr. Pemberton.

Upon entering the home of Dr. Pemberton, James remembered what Dr. Brewbaker had said. Then, he hurried to the rear of Dr. Pemberton's home.

He chanted his words, "The ledger page, November 23, 1865, the page, 23 of 1865, page, 1865..." A shimmering cloud of metallic particles engulfed his shape, form, life, and soul.

A sudden THUMP echoed throughout the land. The injured figure of James lay on the street. The kindly figure of the YMCA president, Dr. Pemberton appeared. He knelt over and picked up the stunned boy. He took him to his own home to care for him.

The morning after the incident, James

found himself in the same house he had left from only two things were different. One, the house was much, much newer. Two, he was plastered with bandages in a bed that looked like it was from the 1800's. As James lay in bed, Dr. Pemberton entered the room. Then, as James was about to speak, Dr. Pemberton rose his hand as if to stop him from speaking. As James was lying back down, Dr. Pemberton said, "Good morning, young fellow. You had a nasty accident yesterday; that is why I brought you here. I am a doctor. You need not talk as weak as you are. Rest, I'll be back later."

Dr. Pemberton walked out of the room. He closed the heavy oak door silently. James relaxed his weary head against the soft, down pillow. His eyelids felt like weights as they closed.

"I didn't know time travel would be so painful," James thought to himself. "I wonder if they have any aspirin." He laughed to himself.

Thus, as his pain left him, he healed. The days became oblivious in his mind. When he finally healed, he knew that months had past. He immediately thanked Dr. Pemberton and asked what he could do to repay his debt. Dr. Pemberton's response was, "I am looking for a lab assistant, though all there is to gain is room and board."

"YES," exclaimed James.

"Well then, you begin learning the trade tomorrow morning so get plenty of sleep," said Pemberton. James smiled happily. He knew that he was one step closer to achieving his goal.

So the next day he went with Dr. Pemberton to the Eagle Drug & Chemical House, and with Dr. Pemberton's help he became a soda jerk for Dr. Pemberton's soda fountain where he worked for the next 18 months. During this time, he gained Pemberton's friendship which he knew he would need to get the old Coca Cola formula.

Then, as the days wore by, he and Pemberton grew closer. The two became as close as brothers. One night, while sitting in Pemberton's foyer, Pemberton did something to astonish James.

"James, I have something I want to share with you." James looked up from the chemistry book he was reading.

"Yes, Mr. Pemberton?" James replied.

"I have been trying different formulas at the fountain, and none seem to be enjoyed by the customers. So, I have decided to move to Atlanta to try my luck there. Before I leave, since you have been such a faithful employee, you may have one of my formulas but you must make the formula correctly in my lab first. Second, you need to leave me a copy of the formula," said Dr. Pemberton.

Then, skillfully, James took Pemberton's ledger and skimmed through it. He went through it, looking for the Coke formula. Finally, he found it about midway through the ledger and took Pemberton down to the lab.

While they were there, James made the correct formula for Pemberton. Then James copied the formula and took the page from the ledger.

On their way home James voiced, "Doctor, I will be moving on. I have enjoyed these two years working with you."

"And I with you, and I with you," sighed Pemberton.

Though he would have liked to stay, he knew he couldn't. "Is there anywhere I can take you?" Pemberton asked James.

"Yes, I'd appreciate it if you could rush me over to St. Philip and Joseph's Church," said James.

So, as they approached the church they heard the bells chime 6:15. James realized he had only eight minutes before Dr. Brewbaker would be there to pick him up. Wishing he could stay longer with Pemberton, he noticed a

speck in the sky getting larger and larger. Then suddenly he was no longer in June 23, 1867; he had been transported on the Santa Maria.

Chapter 4:

Star Performance

Tracy left the riverfront, hopped on her hoverboard and sped to the newly remodeled Springer Opera House. She then took the nuclear-powered elevator to the second balcony where she said to her self over and over again, "February 15,1876, Edwin Booth's Hamlet costume." Her head suddenly began to spin and she fainted.

"Madame Tracy, Madame Tracy -- are you well, ma'am?" Tracy awoke with a jump. She looked up at the young black girl above her.

"Where am I?" she asked in a confused whisper.

The young girl responded, "Why ma'am, you're in the second balcony." Then she remembered, blacks were made to sit on the second balcony in 1876.

She ran down the dimly-lit stairwell tripping over steps three at a time. When she reached the street, she then entered the main lobby quickly, trying not to be too noticeable. She moved into the Emily Woodruff Hall and sat down on the back row next to a properly dressed young couple who were paying more attention to each other than to the show.

While watching Edwin Booth, as Hamlet, she also took notice of the costume in which Edwin was dressed. The costume she was interested in was probably in his dressing-room. She thought about what she had to do. First, go to Edwin's dressing room and get the cape, which was the costume, without him knowing. Even though there were two capes, Edwin may have thought she was stealing his.

Next, she had to get out to the farmland where Columbus College stood in 2058. She had a map of where it was according to locations of landmarks such as Lindsay Creek and Old Macon Road.

Tracy was ready. Hamlet was dead and the curtain was closed. Tracy went backstage to "congratulate" everyone. She slipped through the crowd and into Edwin's dressing room. She nervously shuffled through his costume rack and found the capes in the back.

Suddenly, a noise from behind startled her. She screamed, but it was only a rodent. She successfully found her way through the maze of the Springer and onto the street. She then returned to the lobby, where she asked for a room.

The clerk said,"Yes ma'am, that will be five dollars, please." Tracy handed the clerk a twenty dollar bill.

"Ma'am, are you trying to make a joke of me?" questioned the young lady, who was looking suspiciously at the bill.

Oh, God, what if she notices the date on the bill! thought Tracy. But the woman quickly put the bill in her drawer and went swiftly into a back room only to return with the fifteen dollars which was her change.

When Tracy got to her room, she began to reflect over the events of the days behind. Dr. Brewbaker had definitely been a surprise. She couldn't comprehend meeting a man who had been 52 years of age when her grandfathers had been her age. She began thinking about her them, Grandpa Teddy and Grandad Adam. She wondered if all the stories they told her about their childhoods were really true, about how they were best friends.

But then she thought about the others, and she wondered if they were faring as well as she was. She already had the cape with about 12 hours to spare. But that wouldn't have seemed like too long if she didn't have the cape yet.

She prayed that everyone would make it back with their objects; she didn't think she could bear life without her grandfathers' memories of a better life lived in the past.

She slept a troubled sleep that night.

In the morning, she ate breakfast in a small place on broadway near the Springer whose hotel she'd stayed in that night. She had to be at the church called Holy Family that in 2058 was called... Holy Family! Tracy thought that was pretty neat, how she was going to a 13 year-old church that was almost 200 years where (or when) she came from.

She went back to her room at the Springer and gathered up the cape and a few other things. Then she walked to Holy Family where she prayed that her fellow time travelers would get there with good news that everyone was back with their object, and the past was safe. Oh, God, how she prayed. At 2:17, the Santa Maria loomed overhead. She was safe, and she hoped to God the past was, too.

Chapter 5:

A Dark Day on Wynn's Hill

"I'm Rosaline, Rosaline Land," whispered the timid redhead as she gently batted her eyes. Spencer thought a moment, Oh my God! What have I gotten myself into?

"Hey, has the sleepin' beauty awoke yet?" asked a far away voice that Spencer soon realized belonged to Ruth Land.

"Um, yes -- he has, and he just heard you."

"Oh, sorry," whimpered the girl as she popped her blushed face around the corner and into the little room.

"Who is this, Rosaline?" asked Spence as timidly and as softly as he possibly could, so Ruth wouldn't here. Ruth was much more lady-like and more formal than Rosaline, and Spencer liked her. Ruth was tall and slender, unlike her sister, and had long flowing blond hair. She was dressed in a baby blue frock and had eyes to match it.

"I'm Ruth, thank ya very much!" said Ruth. Quite offensively in fact.

"Gosh, I'm sorry! What's today? Oooooooh," moaned Spencer because his head really was in pain.

"Are you sure that your head is all right? Umm... today is Sunday," complied Rosaline.

"No, what's the date!" snapped Spencer because he was tired of Rosaline, and his head was really killing him.

"There's no reason to be rude about it, but today is June 30," whimpered Rosaline as she sat there in shock over the way Spencer had yelled at her.

"Come on, Rosaline let's leave him be. He needs his rest. Besides we have to get ready for Sunday mass," Ruth said as she tried to pull her sister away from the foreign body lying on the bed.

I don't believe what is happening to me today! Of all the people that I had to bump into on my trip back in time, the family of one of the victims. I guess that's just my bum luck, he thought and then sighed.

Later that day, Spencer decided that he would go exploring. Spencer wondered -- maybe I can find someone that can help me find Cleo or T. Z. Let's think, Cleo is supposed to take the mule to graze around two o'clock, and right now it's a little after one. Golly, I better get goin' or I'll miss everything!

Spencer headed out the door to try and find T.Z.'s cabin in the woods." Hmm, let's see, If I was a cabin where would I be?" wondered Spencer aloud in the kitchen.

"What's that, boy?" asked Mr. Land as he stuffed the last bit of roll in his mouth that was left out from lunch.

"Huh? Oh hi there! I really appreciate you taking care of me the way ya did, Mr. Land!" acknowledged Spence as he tried to tuck in his shirt and fix his hair.

"Are ya hungry? We've got some left over baked beans and ham," said Mr. Land as he opened the small cooler beside the washboard.

"No, not really. Do you know where Cleo is right know? I really need to find him, now!" said Spence impatiently, because he didn't want to be too late.

"Ya just missed him. He went to take the mule to graze, but ya may be able to catch him if ya hurry," mumbled Mr. Land as he tried to swallow the rest of his food.

"Which way did he go?" snapped Spencer as he tried to run out the door.

"Just follow the path by the barn," yelled Mr. Land out the door.

That boy is crazy, said Mr. Land quietly to himself.

Spencer ran as fast as his legs could carry him down the beaten path, when all of a sudden he heard an ear-piercing noise that sent him fleeing to the ground. Spencer shouted, "Oh my God! I'm too late." With that he fled down that path like a locomotive running down a mountain with no breaks. All of a sudden, he came to an

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immediate stop because there, lying in his path, was a black boy kneeling down beside a body murmuring something over and over quietly to himself.

Spencer wanted to say something, but he thought that if he did the boy would run off and then history would be changed forever. As quickly and as quietly as he possibly could, Spence crept behind some greenery and prayed to God that T.Z. wouldn't notice him.

About five to ten minutes after Spence had arrived, the boy seemed to pull him self together a bit and picked up the double-barrelled shotgun, and then grabbed the body. He dragged Cleo Land into an out-of-the-way spot and then ran until Spencer could not see him.

"Man! That was the longest ten minutes, but I'm glad that he's gone." Just then, Spencer remembered that T.Z. goes to the Land's home but then returned because no one was at home. Spence leapt behind a bush, just in time, because T.Z came running back a few seconds later. The boy didn't stop, though. He just kept running as if someone was behind him trying to capture him and kill him. Although Spencer knew that soon that would actually happen, and T.Z's worst nightmares were about to come true!

Later on that evening...

"Cleo, where are ya boy?" shouted Mr. Land and the rest of the Land family as they searched for their lost family member.

Spencer decided not to go back to the Land house immediately. Instead he went for a long walk to try and find sense out of everything that just happened to him . Spencer glanced at his watch and saw it had only moved about five minutes since he left the house and went running down the path. That's really odd, he thought. I can't imagine that my atomic watch could have stopped or slowed down. Spence thought a moment. Maybe time goes by slower when you travel back in time than in the future. That is odd!

By the time that Spencer returned back to the house it was dark and he was having a hard time finding his way, but somehow he did.

"Son, have you seen Cleo recently?" asked Mr. Land anxiously.

Spence thought a minute. What should I say? "Ya, I saw him a couple hours ago. He was walking with the mule down to the pasture. Why?"

"He hasn't come back yet, but the mule done come back two hours or so ago. We're real worried. We thought that he had just been thrown, but now we just don't know," said Cleo's third and last sister Aurora.

"Well, have you looked in the woods?" asked Spencer, trying not to let on that he knew.

"Well, we're gettin' a search party together and we're gonna look some more tonight." Mr. Land grabbed a lantern from the closet.

Spencer began to feel sick to his stomach because he knew exactly what was about to happen. He went down the hall and collapsed on the bed and fell fast asleep. The next morning, Spencer went into the kitchen and found himself amongst some extremely sad faces. He knew, right then, that Cleo had been found, and he was dead. Spencer asked Ruth what the problem was anyway.

"Ruth, what's the problem?" asked Spence obviously trying not to disturb anyone else.

Ruth handed him the newspaper and said, "Cleo's dead." Spencer began to read aloud:

"The Land boy was shot in the eye, the entire load lodging in the head just back of the eye with the exception of a few shot that lodged in the left side of the boy's face. He had been dead several hours when his body was found by anxious members of his family and friends. When the body was first found, it was thought that he had been thrown from the mule and afterwards stepped upon and killed. However, further investigation revealed the fact that the mule had not been near the place where the boy was found and this led those who had been searching to believe that foul play was in evidence.

"Coroner J.S. Terry was immediately notified and, accompanied by Bailiff John R Beahn, went to the scene where a coroner's jury was empaneled and an investigation begun. It was seen that the boy had been shot, and tracks were found near the scene leading to the home of the McElhany boy.

"Bailiff Beahn went to the Negro boy's home to make some investigations. It had been learned that the Land boy had been shot with a shotgun and when Mr. Beahn went to the Negro boy's home he asked to see the gun. The Negro boy denied any knowledge of the shooting whatever, stating his gun had not been fired."

"Mr. Beahn examined the shotgun and found that it had recently fired and then decided to hold the Negro. On the way to the city the Negro admitted that he killed the Land boy, but it was an accident."

"Gosh, I don't know what to say. I'm really sorry!" gasped Spencer as he stared into the blank faces in the room.

"The funeral is this afternoon. Since you knew my son, I think that it would be appropriate that you attended," said Mr. Land with a sigh because he was trying to keep his feelings inside.

"I'd be honored, but I haven't anything to wear," stated Spence, trying not to break down and cry even if he didn't really know the boy. The people at the table almost cracked a smile -- almost, that is.

"You and Cleo are about the same size so you can wear something of his. I can help you," pronounced Ruth as she got up to leave the table.

After the funeral, everyone went back home and basically moped and sulked until the trial of T.Z. McElhany.

The trial began shortly after 9 A.M. on August 13, 1912. The Grand Jury charged T.Z. with the murder of Cleo Land.

T. Z. was barefoot and dressed in shorts and a cheap blue shirt. W.L. Land took the stand first. The shotgun used in the killing and the bloody rags and shirt found in the McElhany boy's cabin were entered into evidence.

The Jury got the case at 3:45 that afternoon and retired to deliberate. At five o'clock, the twelve men returned with their verdict. Jury Foreman William Beach read the verdict: Guilty, three years' labor in the state penitentiary, the maximum sentence allowable under law.

The trouble began when bailiffs R.L. Willis and J.T. Darby started to take the Negro from the courtroom into the sheriff's office. Gathered in the aisles were the people in the courtroom. They proceeded to attack the bailiffs and capture the Negro. The lynchers brought T.Z. McElhany to Wynn's Hill, where they shot him and left T.Z. there to bleed to death.

Luckily, Spencer followed the mob and was able to pick up the gun that was used to kill the boy.

"Whoopie! I've got the gun and the past is saved. I can only hope that everyone else was so successful!" shouted Spencer happily, even though he had just witnessed a murder. Spencer thought, all I have to do now is wait for Frozen Brew. I told him to pick me up on August 14, 1912, at five o'clock. Spence sighed, "Well, I guess that all I have to do now is sit and wait. God, I hope he's on time!"

Chapter 6:

Attacking the Klan

Seventeen-year old Casey Walker left the riverfront. She couldn't believe what had just happened. John had disappeared. He wasn't kidnapped; he had gone back in time. It was too weird to explain.

Casey rode on her hovercar to the office of the Columbus Post. During her assigned time, the paper was called the Columbus Enquirer-Sun.

She wished she had not had to do this speech, but since her grandparents had something to do with the time capsule when it was buried, she was forced by her parents to do it. Now she had to go back in time to get the Pulitzer Prize that editor Julian Harris had won for his attacks on the Ku Klux Klan.

Luckily, the clan had disbanded 20 years ago because its national membership had dwindled to 500. It was no longer able to defend itself from angry minorities, and so it disbanded because no one in the klan was safe.

She arrived at the downtown office of the paper and stood in front of it. She began mumbling the date "April 3, 1926" over and over.

Suddenly, there was a flash of light and she was in front of the office of the paper again. Only it was much changed. She walked over to a boy who was yelling about something.

"EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!" he cried. Casey got close enough to read the dateline.

"April 3, 1925!" she exclaimed. She was really back in time!

Then suddenly a thought struck her. She had to get the Pulitzer back. She was stuck in the "Roaring Twenties" without a cent or a crumb. She hoped she could find that Pulitzer in twenty-four hours or history would be erased.

Thank goodness she had rented a lavish costume that was said to be from the twenties at the Springer Opera House.

Suddenly a trolley stopped beside her. She was standing at a trolley stop. Then she remembered she had a five dollar bill from the twenties in her dress pocket.

Suddenly, she recognized Julian Harris in the back of the trolley. She went back to him.

"I've read your articles in the paper. I think your attacks on the K.K.K. are excellent! Congratulations on your pulitzer prize!" she told him.

"Why thank you!" he said, "But how did you know I won the prize? I only found out about it yesterday!" he asked her, surprised.

"Uh, word travels fast in this town," she said.

"You are absolutely right," he said. "Would you like to come to my house for tea? I'm sure my wife wouldn't mind," he asked.

"Yes!" she exclaimed. This would be a perfect opportunity to get the prize back! They rode the trolley back to his house.

"How old are you?" he asked, "You can't be very old." People had always told Casey she looked older than she was. So she lied.

"I'm twenty-two," she lied. She hoped he would believe her. He did.

"I thought you might be older," he said, "You certainly are well educated for your age. Who is your father?"

"Oh, I live with my uncle," she lied again. He would never believe the truth. After all, it was almost too hard for her to believe. This would be way over his or anyone else here's head. They just didn't have the technology to understand her time. She realized that she would not be able to tell anything about the future, because they would definitely not believe her.

"Well, who is he?" he asked. She thought for a second then said the first name that came to mind.

"Jim Brewbaker," she blurted out. Dr. Brewbaker was the person who had given them the message that they had to travel back in time in the first place.

"Oh, I don't know him," Mr. Harris said.

"He doesn't get out much," she said. Maybe it would be fun to make up a character, but for now she had to concentrate on getting the Pulitzer back in twenty-four hours.

"I didn't get your name," he said.

"Casey Walker," she said.

"That's an odd name,"he said, "Where did you get it?"

"It's a popular name in Europe. My parents live there now," she said. It wasn't exactly a lie; her great-great-grandmother was from Austria. Her parents often visited there without taking her. They generally left her at home. She had only been there once.

"I've never been there," he said. "But I hear it's interesting." She had to admit it was nice there, if you overlook all the pollution in Old-Eastern-Europe.

"Where do you keep the prize?" she asked, rather bluntly. She thought it surprised him to an extent.

"Oh, it's in my study. We'll see it after we have tea," he said, not seeming a bit surprised by her straight forward attitude.

During their tea he showed her a telegram the klan had sent him. It read "SOME OF YOUR BEST FRIENDS BELONG TO THE KKK BUT WE WILL BE YOUR FRIENDS no longer if xx u ConTinUe DeNoUnCinG the KkK which YoU Know NuThInG AbOuT. We seE U EvEry DaY, So Take a TIPP FrOm Us. Lay OFF ThE KKK StUf ReD BLOODED MEN WE ARE"

"Didn't this stuff scare you?" she asked him.

"Not at all," he replied quickly, "The Klan preys on fear." He sure knew plenty about the Klan. She wished she could tell him it had disbanded in her own time.

"Do you have anymore telegrams from the Klan?" she asked him. Her curiosity was growing. Maybe history wasn't so boring after all. She quickly put that thought out of her mind.

The next telegram he showed her read "THE K K K HAS NOT HARMED YOU YET WHY ANTAGONIZE THEM BETTER LAY OFF" How could he stand these threats.

"Why don't you tell the police?" she asked him quickly. Then she realized her mistake.

"Most of them are Klan members, remember?" he said.

"It just slipped my mind," she said. She would have to watch what she said very carefully from now on.

"Let's go into my study and see the prize," he suggested to her. It was now five-o-clock in the afternoon. She looked at her watch. It was still on 2058 time. According to her watch she had been gone from there for five minutes. That was impossible! She had been gone for five hours. That meant that for every hour she spent in the past, it only registered as a minute in the future. She would have extra time!

Then, Mrs. Harris came into the room with tea and a tray of teacakes. For a while they ate and drank in silence.

Mrs. Harris suddenly spoke, "The Klan has found out about your prize, and they are said to be extremely angry. You had better watch out!"

"They haven't done anything more than send me nasty telegrams. They won't try anything until the excitement about the prize is over. It would just mean even more negative publicity for them," he said. Mr. Harris seemed to know every move the Klan would make. He must have studied them in depth.

Casey spoke up, "You never know what they will do they are so unpredictable."

"That depends on how you see it," he told her. "They are unpredictable to an extent, but they are also very predictable."

Casey didn't quite understand, but she nodded as if she understood every word he had said.

"I'd rather not talk about the Klan anymore," Mrs. Harris said quickly, "Casey tell me something about yourself." Casey proceeded to tell Mrs. Harris exactly what she had told Mr. Harris. Lucky thing she had a good memory. Dusk was upon them. Mr. Harris then invited Casey to come into his study and see the prize.

They walked to the study together. Mr. Harris threw open the door and entered the study. Casey noticed it was quite dark in there. Mr. Harris walked all the way into the center of the room. Casey stood to the left of the door where she was hidden in the shadows.

Casey looked around the study. It was about the same as her study at home, except there was no computer in the center of the room. Instead of a computer, there was an old typewriter on the desk.

As Casey scanned the room, she noticed a figure coming from behind the curtains. Her eyes continued on around. She quickly realized the figure had a gun and was definitely not Mr. Harris. She wanted to scream, but the man would surely shoot her if she let him know she was there. He could not see her from her position in the shadows.

The man approached Mr. Harris and put the gun to his head.

"I'm gonna kill you!" he said over and over. Suddenly Mrs. Harris threw the door open. It left Casey even more in the shadows. There was no way the man could see her.

Seeing Mrs. Harris, the man was startled. He threw the gun down and ran out, nearly knocking Mrs. Harris over in the process. Mrs. Harris regained her balance and ran off down the hall after the man.

She quickly appeared in the doorway again. "So the K.K.K. won't attack so soon after the winning of the prize?" she said. Then her face softened. "Are you okay?" she asked.

"Nothing more than a little shook up," he said. Casey found it remarkable how well he regained his composure. "That surprised even me!" he said quickly. Suddenly he remembered Casey. "Casey, are you all right?" he called.

"I'm fine," Casey called back, "I hid in the shadows and he never even saw me!" she exclaimed. She realized how lucky she was to be alive. Had he seen her, her trip to the past would not have been very successful.

"Casey," he addressed her, "Would you like to come to the offices of the paper with me tomorrow?"

"Sure," she said "Who is this man?"

"You're sure it would be okay with your uncle?" he asked.

"He's out of town," she said quickly.

"I thought you said he didn't get out much..." he said.

"Except to visit his sister," she said quickly.

"Oh," he said, "Well, since you would be alone anyway, why don't you stay here tonight?"

"Sure," she obliged. This was great! Now she had somewhere to sleep that night!

That night, in her room, Casey had trouble sleeping. What if that man came back? What if he picked the wrong room? What if he shot her by mistake? Casey quickly told herself that nothing

else would happen. The old Queen song her grandmother often sang ran through her head "Another one bites the dust..." It should have been the Klan's theme song.

The noises that the house made spooked Casey. It must have been an old house, because every time the wind would blow, the house would creak. Every noise the house made, Casey thought it was the man. Finally, Casey slept.

That morning at seven, Casey woke. She thought she was in her own bed at home in 2058. Then, she remembered her mission and all the events of the previous day, and it again occurred to her how weird this was.

She put on her dress and went downstairs to the kitchen. The Harris' cook was in there cooking.

"Go in to the dining room, hon, and breakfast will be ready in a few minutes. My, what an impatient guest you are!" the cook said to her. Casey held her tongue. What had she done? She always ate breakfast in the kitchen at her house, and then she left for school, but then this was a different situation. They didn't even have television in this time!

She stood in the dining room doorway, until Mr. Harris motioned for her to sit down.

"I can't thank you enough for letting me stay here," she said. Actually, she wasn't exactly happy; she hadn't even had a shower that morning, and she would never be able to have her hair the same way it was yesterday. So she had left it down. She hoped this was acceptable in the 1920s.

"We will be leaving for the office in about an hour," said Mr. Harris. They had the best food and strongest coffee that Casey had ever had. She decided that all the robots at home could not cook like this.

After breakfast, Casey went back to her room and tried to style her hair the same way it had been the day before. It just didn't work.

An hour later, she arrived downstairs. Mr. Harris came downstairs after her.

"Good to see you're on time. I don't like late people," he said, quickly. "The car is ready, so let's go."

As they walked toward the garage, Casey thought of her hovercar, still double-parked at the Columbus Post offices. She hoped she wouldn't get another ticket, it was the last thing she needed.

On the ride to the paper, Casey didn't say much. She just wasn't a morning person. She noticed Mr. Harris was carrying the Pulitzer in a brown grocery bag. It seemed less noticeable that way.

When they arrived at the offices of the paper, Mr. Harris showed Casey where his was office was. Casey watched him set the bag on his desk. She also noticed that he set a brown paper bag with supper in it on the desk. It was very similar to the bag with the Pulitzer in it.

Mr. Harris gave her a tour of the offices and also showed her the presses and how they worked. By then it was lunch time. They went out for lunch. Mr. Harris explained that he brought his supper to work and usually ate it in his office while working on his editorials for the next day's evening paper.

After lunch, she browsed in the shops on Broadway (or First Avenue) for hours. She watched old cars with wheels that she had only seen photographs of before. She thought of the pollution and problems they had caused. They were over that in 2058. Well, except for in Old Eastern Europe. That place had been deemed hopeless.

It was 6:30 before she returned to the paper.

Mr. Harris was out of his office. Casey noticed his dinner was still there. She decided that she would ask him to see the prize and take it outside to see it better in the light. Then the time-ship and Dr.Brewbaker would come for her. It would work so well. So she waited for Mr. Harris to come back. She waited until five-before-seven. Mr. Harris still was not back. Casey decided this would be her only opportunity. She grabbed on of the bags and ran down to the street.

Casey didn't understand. Why wasn't Dr. Brewbaker here in the time-ship? She dared to look into the bag. She couldn't believe what she had done. She had grabbed Mr. Harris' lunch.

Casey ran up the stairs hoping that Mr. Harris was still out. She opened the door and breathed a sigh of relief. He was still gone. She grabbed the bag and ran down to the street.

Casey saw a ship appearing out of the clouds. At the wheel was Dr. Brewbaker. She boarded the ship. Turning back to look at the street she saw Mr. Harris. She hid the Pulitzer from his view.

"Good-bye Mr. Harris!" she called. He didn't hear her. He was looking at the sidewalk below him where the Pulitzer sat. Casey looked and saw the prize in her hand.

She wasn't really worried about it because she had accomplished her mission impossible.

Chapter 7:

Brown Lungs and Gold Bobbins

Alexis stepped off the bullet train in front of Swift Textiles. She had already put on the mill worker's costume that she picked up from the Springer Opera House. She kicked off her Warp Zone Nike Airs when she sat on an old bench against the wall of the mill.

"Gold bobbin," she said. "Gold bobbin and May 21, 1919. I just have to keep concentrating on a gold bobbin and May 21, 1919." She sat in deep thought for a few moments, envisioning the past. An odd feeling passed over Alexis, and when she opened her eyes, she found herself in the past century.

Dirty workers strolled around the mill as dinner toters brought them food. Alexis looked on in awe as a child bleeding from the hand took advantage of the break and ate a sandwich.

"How can they stand this?" she muttered under her breath. "Twelve hours of work with only a half an hour break and they still come back every day."

"What did you say?" said a thin, stringy haired girl near the bench.

"I didn't notice you. I was just talking to myself," answered Alexis.

"Oh," said the girl. "Do you work here? I've never seen you before. By the way, my name is Sara, what's your's?"

"Alexis. And no, I don't work here. I'm from out of town."

"Are you visiting relatives?" asked Sara.

Alexis replied cautiously, "No, I'm looking for something."

"What are you looking for?" Sara again questioned.

Alexis thought for a minute before she answered, not sure that she could

trust the girl. "Well, do you promise not to tell anyone?"

Sara considered this before she said, "Not if you don't want me to."

"Well" Alexis said, "I probably shouldn't tell you this, but I'm looking for a bobbin dipped in gold."

Sara looked at her skeptically. "What do you need with a bobbin dipped in gold?"

Alexis answered, "Well, I can't explain the story right now, but what I can tell you is that it is very important to the future."

Sara smiled as if she understood. "If you want me to, I can help you get it."

"Would you do that?" Alexis asked in amazement.

"Of course I can!" answered Sara.

"Do you know where I could find one?" questioned Alexis.

"Well," said Sara, "at our mills, the management gave all the supervisors bobbins dipped in gold to use as ornaments instead of using the money to improve the conditions of the mill. The other workers will also help us. Everyone's bitter about the bad working conditions. In fact, we're having a union rally tomorrow to protest the way they spend money on things like gold bobbins while children are getting hurt and even losing limbs because they won't fix the faulty machinery."
The girls sat on the bench in front of the mill. They put their heads together and came up with a plan to retrieve the bobbin.

Knowing that Alexis needed to get as close to the supervisor's office as possible, Sara came up with an idea. "Why don't you apply for a job here at the mill?"

Alexis thought it was a wonderful idea, and couldn't imagine why she hadn't thought of it earlier.

The girls went into the mill, where Alexis applied for a job in the spinning room. She would begin working early in the morning, but she needed a place to stay for the night.
"There is a vacancy where I live," said Sara.

"Great!" replied Alexis. Sara showed Alexis the way to her house after she was done with her work. The house wasn't very nice, but it didn't seem to bother Alexis because she had one purpose and that was to get the bobbin.

As the bright sun started to shine through the bedroom window, Sara walked in to tell her it was time to go to work. Alexis rose from hard and hole-filled mattress, eager to begin the day.

On the way to work, Alexis was filled with questions. "Exactly how much money do you make working as a spinner?"

"Between 35 and 40 cents for a day's work," answered Sara.

Alexis thought to herself, all that work and receiving nothing but chump change. Compared to the 20th Century, her life back home looked a lot more extravagant.

The girls continued their conversation by going over their plans to retrieve the bobbin. Arriving at work, Sara showed Alexis where they would be working. Alexis took a seat between the spinning wheel and the box of bobbins and immediately began to work.

By coincidence Alexis noticed that her job was located only about one yard away from the supervisor's office. Peering through the office door, Alexis spotted the bobbin sitting on his desk, reflecting the glare of the sun pouring through the window. Sara assured Alexis that she would distract the supervisor while she got the bobbin.

Alexis' nerves were on edge, her stomach had butterflies, and she was sweating tremendously because the bobbin was in reach. Immediately Sara began to scream as if she were in pain.

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Quickly the supervisor ran out of his office to see what was going on. Alexis flew into his office, grabbed the bobbin and jetted back to her work. Carefully, Alexis placed the bobbin into her bag and continued to work.
As for Sara, she explained to her supervisor, "I'm sorry for all of the commotion, but I accidentally cut my finger. I'm all right now." The supervisor returned to his office and slammed the door so hard everyone in the mill jumped.

Looking across the other spinning wheels and spinners, Sara spotted Alexis. Alexis winked her eye at Sara as a sign that she had the bobbin. The girls had worked enough for the day. It was time to go.

"Do you mind if we attend the union rally?" said Sara. "It's being held right outside in the street."

"Of course not. I have a while before I have to leave," stated Alexis, as she grabbed her bag.

People had already gathered in the streets. The two girls found a comfortable place where they could hear the speakers.

The main speaker at the union rally introduced himself as John Thomas. As he was speaking, nonunion workers were screaming and cursing at him. Alexis and Sara were not enjoying themselves.

"We can go now if you would like to," said Sara.

"That sounds like a good idea to me," replied Alexis.

As the girls were leaving, someone called out, "Thomas, you %$#@! I'm going to kill you." The nonunion workers open fired on the crowd and the lights went out. Alexis felt a sharp pain in her shoulder and blacked out.

Alexis awoke fifteen minutes later in a hospital bed. Sara was at the foot of her bed holding her bag. "The doctor said that the bullet just grazed your arm. You blacked out because of shock. He says you'll be all right."

"Thanks for getting my bag and staying with me," said Alexis. "I'm being picked up at the Catholic church. Will you walk with me?"

The girls were silent as they walked down the street. When they got to the church, they didn't seem to know what to say.

"I guess this is good-bye," muttered Sara.

"Yes. Before I go, I'd like to thank you for your help and tell you that you're a great friend. I wish I could take you with me," Alexis said sorrowfully.

Sara smiled sadly. "I have to go. My mom will be worried."

Alexis waved as Sara left. Well, she thought, I got the bobbin back, I got shot, and I made a new friend. Now I'm ready to go home. Alexis looked up to the sky.

Chapter 8:

Dealing With a Deck of Marked Cards

Kaegan stepped on her aero-bike skeptically and glanced behind her. She saw her friends getting on their various modes of transportation. Kaegan sat on her seat and flicked on the power switch. After thinking for a moment, she knew what she was going to have to do. The problem, however, was that she didn't know how to do it. She knew she must rescue the marked cards, or the time would be forgotten. This time, however bad it was, was part of her heritage. Her family was descended from this area, so she went on her way.

Kaegan rode her aero-bike across the over-river bridge, instead of the tunnel. Most of the traffic used the tunnel because it was faster, but Kaegan needed time to think. She flicked the switch on her aero-bike to aerial and flew over the pedestrians on the moving sidewalk. While crossing into Alabama, she stopped beside the bridge. She knew this was the sight of an old famous "honky-tonk," as such clubs were called, named The Poppy Club.

Her grandmother had let her watch the film that documented the time a couple of years ago, before she went in to the rest home. She dismounted her aero-bike and stood on the side of the river, in Coulter Park. She remembered what Doctor Brewbaker had told her group, to think about where they were going. To concentrate on one certain date, is what he said.

She noticed people strolling by staring at her in her old vintage clothing. She was wearing a revealing black sequin dancing dress that was vintage from that time. It was an actual dress of a "B-girl," slang for a bar girl. Kaegan closed her eyes and thought June 1, 1954. She envisioned the nightclub that she had seen so many pictures and clippings of before. She imagined the voices of the G.I.'s crossing the bridge, looking for a good time.

"Kaegan, girl, if Tanner comes out and sees you just standing here, you'll end up in the river. C'mon, girl, get back in the club," a thick Southern voice drawled.
Kaegan turned around to see a bleach-blond haired girl with full rich red lips and too much eye make-up. She wore a dress similar to hers, except hers was red.

"Who are you?" Kaegan asked.

"Ooooh, girl. Have you been drinkin' again? You know the rules, girl. What has been the matta wi' chou lately? Jist ta humor ya, I'll tell ya. Mah name is Sandie Caldwell. Lawd, girl, if you don't git straight, I jist don't know. I know ya ain't but jist a teenager, but you been in the business for about two yea's," Sandie said.

"I know, Sandie. I was just in a daze. It happens sometimes, even to the best of us," Kaegan said, thinking of an accurate rebuttal.

"That's the Kaegan I know," Sandie said smiling. "Thatta girl. C'mon, the soldiers will be in soon. Gotta get ready." Sandie and Kaegan started into The Poppy Club. As Kaegan opened the door, Sandie said, " How didja git a weird name like Kaegan anyway?" Kaegan just smiled at her. As they walked in, a robust, balding man approached them.

"Hello, Beautiful," he said stroking Kaegan's shoulder. Kaegan pulled back. " What's the matter, Kae, you never pulled back before. You ain't starting to get shy on me, are you?"

Kaegan regained herself; she remembered what she was here to do. She was here to save history. Kaegan smiled the most seductive smile she could manage and said, " Sorry, you just kind of surprised me." The man stopped scowling and began smiling a big beefy grin. "Good girl."

"How ya doin, Tanner?" Sandie asked. " That's Tanner!" Kaegan thought.

"Oh, pretty good, Sandie." Tanner replied. " You girls ready? Tonight, all our little customers will have lots and lots of money. So you two will have to be sweet as honey. That won't be any problem for you, though, Kaegan. Will it honey?"

"No, sir. Has it ever been?" Kaegan asked knowingly.

"No, honey. No, it hasn't. But, Sandie, quit wising off with the customers, okay, hon?"

"Whateva', Tanner," Sandie grumbled. Tanner winked at both of us and walked off, stopping at a pretty, scantilly dressed brunette. " Well, you got the roulette table tanight, 'kay?" Sandie informed her.

"Thank you, Sandie. What time will we open?" Kaegan asked.

"Ya done went pure crazy, Kae. Eight, ya got it," Sandie sighed.

"Got it," Kaegan smiled.

"Try not ta fergit it again," Sandie smiled. Kaegan started to walk off. "Hey, Kaegan!" Sandie called. " Ya wanna go git a burger or something before work? We got about an hour or two, if ya want."

"Sure, Sandie. You want to change first?" Kaegan asked. Sandie laughed and led Kaegan to the back of the club and up a flight of stairs. At the top were five doors and an open door that contained a bathroom. Sandie went and opened the third door on the left. Kaegan paused at the top of the stairs. "Ya comin'?" Sandie asked.

Kaegan followed Sandie into the room. It contained four twin beds, two on each wall. Against the wall, by the window, were two chest of drawers. Sandie walked over to a closed door and opened it. It revealed a closet. "Ya wanna jist wear some petal-pushers and a blouse?" Sandie asked.

"Yeah, that would be fine," Kaegan replied. Sandie threw a pair of black slack looking things, and a white button-up, short sleeved blouse. Sandie grabbed a purple pair of the same kind of pants and a black button up shirt. Sandie began to strip off her clothes. She stood there in a bra and panties. "Well, ain't ya goin to git dressed?" Sandie asked.

"Uh, yeah, "Kaegan began to take off her clothes and get dressed. After waiting about for Sandie to fix her hair, they were finally ready to go. Kaegan noticed these pants were extraordinarily tight.

"Sandie, we haven't got that much time," Kaegan stated.

"I know, girl. It seems to me that jist a couple a hours ago, you was askin' me what time it was," Sandie laughed. Kaegan smiled and the two departed down the stairs. They left through a back door marked Employees Only." This door led through an office and out another door that put them in the back of the club.

Sandie and Kaegan walked around the building to the bustling sidewalk out front. They walked about two blocks when they came to a little cafe. Sandie opened the door and led Kaegan to a booth in the back of the Lysol-scented room.

A snotty looking waitress approached them. "Can I take your order?" she sniffed. Sandie rolled her eyes toward the ceiling.

"If you are wantin' ta take my ordah, you gonna have ta drop your goody two shoes attitude," Sandie quipped. The waitress flipped her long blond hair over her shoulder and sniffed. " I'm sorry," she said, obviously not meaning it.

"That's a li'l betta, girl. I'll be a havin' a cheeseburger and a chocolate malt, iffen ya don't mind waitin' on a po' white trash girl that has ta work fer a living an' not live high on the hog," Sandie said.

Kaegan sensed that Sandie despised rich or even middle classed people. "I

wonder if she's always been poor," Kaegan thought.

"Well, what about you?" the waitress said, glancing over at Kaegan.

"I'll have the same," Kaegan replied, not quite knowing what a chocolate malt was.

" Coming right up, ladies." The prissy-looking waitress walked off. As she was leaving, she mumbled. Kaegan caught some of what she said. "Dumb, stupid whores," is what she heard. Kaegan sighed repressively. "How am I going to live with this?" Kaegan thought to herself.

" I jist hate how these rich, li'l ol' school girls come 'round actin' like they so much betta than we are. They ain't no betta. They probably workin' ta save up that money ta buy a new car or somethin'. But me, I work jist ta feed my face, and sometimes not even that. I neva told ya ma story, did I Kaegan?" Sandie asked. Kaegan shook her head no.

" Well, mah family is livin on the outskirts of town. We was livin in a li'l one bedroom shotgun house. It wasn't much, but it was all we could affo'd, so I didn't complain. Mah momma died when I was seven, leavin' ma pa ta fend for five chillun. Me, I'm the oldest. I got four li'l kidrens at home, mah li'l brotha's and sista's.

"Well, see now, I'm seventeen, and mah pa says ta me, 'Sandie, baby, I love ya and ya know it don't ya?' And of course, I says yes. Well, pa he tells me he got fired from the mill that day, and he ain't gonna have no job no more, no way ta support us. Well, that day, I was walkin ta the store to git some milk for Cheryl, she's the baby. As I was walkin down that sidewalk, this big ol' fancy car pulled up besides me. The man inside call out, 'Hey, purty girl, come here.'

"So's I go ovah. The man says ta me, 'How would ya like a good payin job?' I says,' Gee, mista, I'd like it highly.' He smiled and told me if I was wantin ta find out more 'bout this job ta come ta The Poppy Club on Fourteenth Street at eight, and he'd gimme an interview. I was so happy, I fo'got ta buy baby Cheryl's milk. I ran all the ways home, all two miles. I was all sweaty an' achey when I finally gots there.

"I ran inside an' told mah pa. He grinned a huge ol' whopper of a grin. He says ta me, ' Ya take this job, Sandie. Whatever it is. Then the family will have enough money ta live.' What he really meant was that he could sit his fat lard at home while I was out there a workin. I didn't know that then, I thought he was really happy that I got a job. I didn't know until latah that the mill didn't fire him, he quit.

"So, now I send mah money home. I don't send it ta pa. No, the only reason I sends it is so mah family kin survive. Mah pa is a bad person, Kaegan, bad. I kin tell yore life wasn't that bad, or eltha ya hide it well. Ya act like ya should be a citified girl like that ol' waitress girl." Sandie said. The waitress brought their orders over. She rolled her eyes at us, spun around, and walked off. Kaegan nearly had tears in her eyes. This girl, Kaegan thought. She has had such a terrible life.

"So, Kaegan, what about you? If it ain't too personal, ya know," Sandie asked. Kaegan sipped a swallow of her chocolate malt. This tastes kind of like a milkshake, Kaegan thought. "Well, I was born in Columbus..." Kaegan started.

"At home?" Sandie interrupted.

"Excuse me?" Kaegan asked.

"At home, were you born at home?" Sandie repeated.

Kaegan, understanding the question, replied, " No, no in a hospital..."

"In a hospital! Wow!" Sandie interrupted again. Kaegan flashed an annoyed look at her. "Sorry, I'll hush," Sandie apologized.

Well, my parents were..." Kaegan stalled. She couldn't very well say her mother was a biochemical research analyst and her father a space explorer. No she couldn't say that. She thought of some common occupations of the time. " My mother is a housewife and my father works at the mill. I have a sister named Kilby. I did have a brother named Chandler, but he died when he was thirteen.

"He had a disease..." Kaegan had placed herself in a corner again. She couldn't say he died of an infectious disease from killer bees, because they hadn't appeared yet. "...tuberculosis. Oh look at the time, it's 6:30. I had better eat," Kaegan sighed a sigh of relief. She had gotten herself out of an explanation this time, but could she do it again?

Kaegan finished up her meal, they paid for it, and they left. They went back to the club. This time, the duo went in the back door that they had come out of when they left. They went back upstairs to their room. This time there was a red-haired girl and a Spanish looking girl on the other side of the room. "Hi, Sandie. Hi, Kaegan." the Spanish looking girl said.

"Hey, Ramona. Hi, Cassie," Sandie said. The red-haired girl looked up at Sandie and smiled.

"Betta git dressed, girls. Showtime's in ten," Sandie said, opening the closet. She pulled out the red dress she was wearing earlier. She also pulled out Kaegan's black dress. She strolled over to Kaegan and handed it to her.

"Thanks, Sandie," Kaegan said. Kaegan began to disrobe. She stood clad in her underwear. The other girls were also getting dressed. She unzipped the back of the dress and stepped into it.

"Sandie, could you help me with this?" Kaegan asked. Sandie came over and zipped her up. " Thanks." Sandie shrugged. Kaegan pulled up the stockings that were lying on the bed. She then slipped her thin feet into the black high heeled shoes. She started out the door.

"Kaegan, ain't you forgetting something?" the red-haired girl named Cassie asked.

"Uh, am I?" Kaegan asked.

"Your makeup, honey. Your makeup!" Ramona interjected before Cassie could tell me.

"I don't think I'm going to wear any tonight," Kaegan replied.

"Tanner ain't gonna like that one, Kae. We know you are his favorite, but I don't think he'll like this one," Ramona said while putting dark red blush on her high cheekbones.

"Well, maybe just a little bit," Kaegan replied.

"I'll put it on ya, Kae. Come here," Sandie said. Kaegan went over to Sandie who was sitting at a crude looking vanity table filled with old looking makeup. "Sit down," Sandie commanded. Kaegan obeyed silently. Sandie began to put face powder, blush, eye shadow, eye liner, and lipstick on Kaegan's usually natural face.

Kaegan looked in the mirror. She saw her lips painted red, her cheeks the same color. On her eyes, Sandie had painted a dark blue shadow. The bottoms of her eyes were lined a dark black. The face powder had made her face unusually pale.

"Do ya want me ta fix your hair, too?" Sandie said. Kaegan nodded. Sandie twisted Kaegan's long blond hair into a tight bun on the back of her head. She took several pins and fastened the tight ball.

"All done. You're purty, Kaegan. Ya make me jealous sometimes." Sandie said wistfully. Cassie and Ramona sighed and walked out.

Kaegan got up and shut the door." Sandie, can I talk to you?" Kaegan asked.

"Yeah, you can trust me with anythin'. Actually, I feel kinda

special," Sandie smiled. Kaegan felt she could trust her.

"Sandie, do you know where Ma Beachie's is?" Kaegan asked.

"Ma Beachie's club? Why sure, everybody does," Sandie replied.

"Can you take me there first thing tomorrow morning?" Kaegan asked.

"Yeah, sure. I guess I could. Why?" Sandie asked.

"Sandie, I'm not really the Kaegan you know. I am Kaegan Ashmore. I am from the year 2058. I have come back to retrieve a package of marked cards that were in the time capsule at the University of Georgia at Columbus," Kaegan explained.

"What? There's no such thing. There is only Columbus College and that is just under construction," Sandie replied. Kaegan smiled. She knew it would take a little bit to make it sink into Sandie's head.

"Well, if I don't get those cards back, this part of history goes down the drain. Do you understand?" Kaegan said.

"No, not really. I don't. I kinda think you are a li'l looney, but since you my friend, I'll help ya," Sandie said in a bewildered state.

"Thank you, Sandie. Whoever Kaegan is here, she has a very good friend," Kaegan responded.

"Me? Really? Thank ya, Kae," Sandie smiled. Kaegan laughed and the two began going down the stairs. They walked into the club. There were already men at the bars, and a few playing the games. " See ya aftah work, Kae." Sandie said, stopping at a roulette table. Kaegan smiled and walked to the roulette table Sandie had pointed out before.

A fat, dowdy looking man approached her. "Hi, Kaegan. I got paid today. Honey, I plan to spend all of it here. You're my good luck charm," the man drawled. His breath smelled bad. Kaegan's stomach wretched . She began to spin the wheel, and dropped the ball in. "Gimme five! Gimme five." the man chanted. The ball began to slow down. It stopped on twenty-three. "Aww ... damn!" the man yelled. Kaegan shrugged.

"Another try?" Kaegan asked.

"Yeah, and baby, this better be worth it," the man said, his voice traced with annoyance.

The man didn't win. Actually, he lost all his money. The night wore on and on, like this. Kaegan's customers were mostly fat, sweaty, smelly men and G.I.'s.

The night finally came to an end. Everybody left. The bouncers had to throw a couple of lingerers out, but other than that, everything was fine. "How was your night?" Sandie asked. "You was purty busy."

"Fine," Kaegan replied. She was tired and ready for bed.

"Let's go get tonight's pay," Sandie suggested. Kaegan nodded. They both had the money that they had made that night. They walked to Tanner's office where some of the other girls had accumulated. They stood in line. Kaegan wondered what was about to happen.

The line grew shorter. Sandie went on up to Tanner's desk. She handed him her money. He counted it swiftly. He then handed her a portion of this money. She walked out. Kaegan paused.

"C'mon, Kae." Tanner called. Kaegan walked in and handed him her money. He began counting it. He smiled.

"As usual, you made the most money," Tanner stated. Kaegan nodded. "Good girl," Tanner said. "Good girl." He handed Kaegan twenty-five dollars, out of her two-hundred, and she walked out the door. She walked up the back stairs to her room. Sandie and Ramona were already in there. Kaegan wondered where Cassie was.

"Where's Cassie?" Sandie asked. Ramona drew her lips into a pencil-thin line.

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"Uh, Cassie...she got a little carried away tonight. They took her to the river."

"The river?" Sandie gasped. Kaegan was confused.

"What do you mean?" Kaegan asked.

"They killed her, you fool!" Ramona yelled. She then burst into tears. Kaegan felt a tad of remorse, but began to undress. She noticed Sandie go to the bathroom. Kaegan walked down the hall to the open bathroom door. Sandie was washing her face. Kaegan joined her.

"Bad thing about still bein' a teenaja," Sandie said.

"What's that?" Kaegan asked scrubbing the soap off her face.

"We still get acne," Sandie said. Kaegan laughed and they both walked back to their room.

"Do we sleep in this?" Kaegan whispered to Sandie. Sandie smiled and nodded. They walked into the room and went to sleep.

Sunlight bathed Kaegan's face. A soft breeze rippled over her. She felt like she was at the beach. Was she? Where was she? She opened her eyes. The memory of where she was flooded into her brain, like a dam that was too full exploding. She saw Sandie sitting at the vanity table. It looked as if she was writing. Kaegan swung her long legs over the side of the bed, and strode to where Sandie was.

"What are you doing?" Kaegan asked.

"Writing," Sandie replied.

"Writing?" Kaegan asked.

"I like to write stories. I write stories about a girl named Kae. Hope ya don't mind. She's kinda...what would you say. Ya know, the sayin' that means like you?" Sandie asked Kaegan.

"Alter-ego?" Kaegan supplied. Sandie nodded.

"What time is it?" Kaegan asked.

"Two thirty-five,"Sandie replied calmly, looking up at the clock.

"Two thirty-five?!?!" Kaegan said in a panic. "I've got to get dressed!" Kaegan stammered, beginning to put on the clothes she wore to the cafe last night.

"Oh, yeah. You gotta go to Ma Beachie's," Sandie stated.

"Yeah!" Kaegan said buttoning up her shirt.

"I'll go call a cab. Okay?" Sandie asked. Kaegan nodded her approval. She slipped on her shoes, and went downstairs to join Sandie. Sandie was at the front door. "C'mon. The cab'll be here in about..."

Before she could finish her sentence, the cab was there. They both got in. Kaegan looked at her watch. It read two forty-five.

"Ma Beachie's," Sandie said to the greasy cabbie. The cabbie nodded, and set off. It took about twenty minutes to get there. The time was now five after three. Sandie paid the cabbie as Kaegan ran into the club. She knew Frozen Brew would be there in twenty five minutes. Kaegan ran through the door. An old woman was standing right by the doorway.

"Can I help you?" her ancient sounding voice cracked.

"Yes, can I buy a pack of cards from you?" Kaegan said, knowing that they all were marked.

"Yeah, I s'pose." the old lady said. "They're two dollars a box. They're specially made." She winked conspiratorially at her.

"I haven't got time to chat, I need them now," Kaegan said urgently. She dug in her pocket and pulled out the five dollar bill she had made last night. She shoved it at her and snatched the cards away. " Your change!" Ma Beachie shouted as Kaegan ran out the door.

"Keep it!" Kaegan called back.

"Thank ya, missy! Nice doin' business with ya. Come back anytime! By the way, do you need a job?" Ma Beachie called.

"No thanks, Ma. No, thanks." Kaegan replied to the old woman. Ma Beachie

sighed and walked back in the house. Kaegan stood beside Sandie. All of a sudden, a bright metallic flash lit the sky. Kaegan knew it was Frozen Brew coming to get her. She had succeeded. The past would not be forgotten. Neither would this friendship.

Chapter Nine:

A Sabotaged Strangling

Feeling confused and frightened, Isabelle got on the monorail after leaving the riverfront. Quickly after depositing her fare, she slunk into a nearby seat, trying to avoid the stares of her fellow passengers. She slid further into the smooth seat, feeling incredibly conspicuous in her bell-bottom pants made of a thick, uncomfortable fabric and her hideously patterned shirt.

Isabelle got off at the Wynnton Complex, a gigantic, 1,000-store mall and apartment building that had been built during the soaring twenties. She headed straight to a restroom, thinking it best for no one to see her disappear. Once locked in a stall, Isabelle started trembling uncontrollably, unable to concentrate or work up the desire to concentrate on transporting herself to the past.

"I'm gonna get blown to bits or something," Isabelle whimpered. "I don't want to go." A sudden, loud beep caused her to jump with fright.

She pushed the button labeled "Telephone" on her wristband and immediately was looking into the face of Dr. Brewbaker.

"Wow, this thing is neat!" he exclaimed.

"Neat?" Isabelle questioned.

He chuckled softly, then said, "I guess it's a bit before your time. I was just calling everybody on these little thingamajigs to make sure they had left. You'd better get going; you only have 24 hours, you know. Hey, did you know that these little things have radios, too?"

Isabelle sighed and hung up on Dr. Brewbaker. She took a deep breath and began to concentrate. Suddenly, she felt dizzy and faint. She felt oddly

separated from her body. "This is how it must feel to be paralyzed," she thought fleetingly," except I can't even breathe." She felt as though she didn't even exist; as though her entire existence was but a thought, a memory. She struggled to see or feel something, but there was nothing -- no sound, no smell, no sight, no feel -- nothing. All this occurred in less time than it would have taken to blink an eye, but it seemed like an eternity.

Isabelle came to with a jolt, feeling more scared than she had ever felt in her entire life. She peered into the oppressing darkness around her; but even though it was dark, she knew that it was something. She was at least in a place, some place; the only question was where, and more appropriately, when she was.

Although she wanted desperately to somehow return to her own place and time, she reluctantly headed toward a distant light. As she stumbled and fell, a voiced barked out,"Who goes there?" Frozen with fright and the pain of the ankle sprained with her fall, Isabelle gave no response. Suddenly, she heard gunshots. They were directed at her! Though too scared to say anything much, Isabelle managed with difficulty to stutter out in a whisper, "H-h-help! I'm a f-f-fr-fr-friend! "Finding her voice at last, she yelled, "Don't shoot!"

Seeing a figure rushing toward her, Isabelle thought frantically, "Oh no! It's the Stocking Strangler! He's gonna kill me!" As a policeman's shiny badge flashed into view, she breathed an audible sigh of relief. An old-fashioned flashlight beam shone across her face and the towering officer started furiously firing questions at the cowering girl.

"Who are you?" he demanded for the second time." What are you doing out here at this time of night? Don't you know about the curfew? You could be--"

"Oh, I'm so very sorry, Officer," a woman's voice interrupted as she raced to the scene, "This is my granddaughter, visiting me from California. She doesn't know about the curfew. She must have slipped out without my noticing her." As the old woman spoke, she reached out and with a surprisingly strong and steady hand, helped Isabelle onto her feet.

"Not a good time for visiting," the policeman commented, still somewhat troubled about the old woman and young girl out so late.

"Well, her mother and father are out of town, so she's staying with me, and you know that having someone around, even a rather young someone, can be comforting and helpful."

Throughout the entire conversation, Isabelle shifted her uneasy gaze from one to the other in confusion. Was this woman mistaking her for someone else?

"I'm terribly sorry to trouble you, Officer. It won't happen again, I'm sure," said the old lady, ending the conversation.

"Would you like for me to escort ya'll home?" the policeman inquired, slipping from his professional tone into a softer, more relaxed voice.

"No thanks, I'm sure we can make it just fine."

Isabelle had ended up in the woods behind a group of houses, the nearest being that of Ruth Schwob, the woman who had rescued Isabelle from the interrogation of the policeman.

Careful of Isabelle's throbbing ankle, the woman, who introduced herself as Mrs. Schwob, led the trembling girl to the small but neat house. After comfortably seating Isabelle in the warm, homey kitchen, Ruth Schwob finally turned and spoke directly to Isabelle.

"Don't worry, I'm not a senile old lady who thinks you're really my granddaughter. That was just a lie to get you out of trouble. It's awful to think that people are even getting panicked enough to accuse a teenage girl of murder, but... So, who are you?"

"My name is Isabelle."

"Isabelle," Ruth repeated. "What a pretty name. Now, I suppose you wouldn't care to explain to me what you were doing out in the woods at one o'clock in the morning?" She paused, then decided she wouldn't get a response. "Okay... would you like something warm to drink? Tea or cocoa?"

Isabelle frantically tried to remember what either tea or cocoa was. "Uh... um... I'd like some ..." she stammered. Then, she remembered that tea was an ancient drink from the old China. "Cocoa, please," Isabelle answered, wanting to stay away from a strange Chinese drink.

She sipped hot cocoa as she asked, "Are you Mrs. Ruth Schwob, wife of Simon Schwob?"

"I sure am, though my husband, Simon, passed away. I'm all alone, now."

"Oh, I'm so sorry."

"Well, I've kept myself occupied in the long years since Simon died with my jogging and other exercise activities as well as fund-raising and other community projects. Here's some ice for that ankle," she said, still bustling around the kitchen. "It looks sprained."

"May I ask one more thing?" Isabelle pressed on.

"Sure, what?"

"What is today's date?"

"Why it's the tenth of February, 1978."

Isabelle drank the last of her cocoa, which had been very good, and made a move to get up."Thank you very much."

"Don't you even think about leaving, dear. You'll stay right here until you've rested up a bit and your ankle has healed." Isabelle made a weak sound of resistance before Mrs. Schwob continued. "You obviously have no family here and are unfamiliar with this area. You won't have to tell me anything you don't want to, and I won't ask. Just stay here for a few days." Mrs. Schwob was saying exactly the words that Isabelle had wanted to hear, knowing it would be a lot easier to retrieve the stockings that were used in the attack of Ruth Schwob if she were actually in the house of the victim.

Isabelle wished that she could tell this nice lady about her attempted murder and save her from it, but she knew that she could not drastically change the past because of the effects that it might have on the future.

Isabelle quickly fell into the sleep that came to her in the tiny bed of the guest room, in spite of the eerie nighttime sounds of the house.

At about ten o'clock, Isabelle woke up to a wonderful scent that she could not identify. Making her way to the kitchen, Isabelle found the source of the delicious aroma -- bacon and eggs frying in a big skillet.

For the first time in her life, Isabelle wished she had been born into an earlier time when meals were still cooked and prepared by humans in a kitchen. Isabelle breathed in deeply, then got to work devouring the breakfast set before her.

"That was delicious!" Isabelle exclaimed as she helped wash the breakfast dishes.

Mrs. Schwob laughed -- a high, clear, merry laugh that reminded Isabelle of tinkling little bells -- as she said, "My, you're easy to please. My cooking can't even compare to that of most of my friends. I'm usually too busy to do much cooking."

Ruth paused, then asked about Isabelle's ankle.

"It's better," she replied, "I mean, I can walk on it without too much pain."

"How would you like to do some grocery shopping for me?" Mrs. Schwob asked.

Thoughts of women going through aisles picking up items and placing them in little carts on wheels ran through Isabelle's mind. It sounded like fun and she had always wanted to try it, so she answered an enthusiastic, "Sure!"

"Wonderful! There's a small grocery store about three blocks from here, and you can go there. I'm having a meeting at my house at noon today. We've had to hold all meetings in the daytime since the...." She looked around carefully, as though if anyone heard her words they would become reality, before she continued, "...murders have started."

With a deep breath, Ruth returned to her brisk self. "If you leave about 11:30, you can skip the questions and stares of all the old women at the meeting. Here's my shopping list. You just go into the bathroom and get ready to go."

Happily, Isabelle went off to the bathroom, most thoughts of the strangler forgotten.

As she walked to the grocery store, though, it was impossible to forget the constant, imposing threat of the Stocking Strangler. The horror was written plainly on the face of every person Isabelle encountered on her three block walk.

She watched as people spent as long as ten minutes identifying visitors at their doors and then unlocking the various locks. She stared in amazement at the two moving trucks and three locksmiths' vans she saw along her route.

Had things really gotten that bad in Columbus?

Finally, she reached the store, where gossip ran amuck. Some of the talk about the strangler was so wild that she had to laugh in spite of the everything.

Isabelle got all of the items on the list and headed back to Mrs. Schwob's house, still amazed at the amount of panic shown. Even though it was broad daylight, she saw not a single child unaccompanied by an adult.

Ruth was busy cleaning up as Isabelle entered the house. "Oh, you're just in time! Would you mind helping me clean the house? It's looking filthy!"

By the time the day was over and the house was clean, Isabelle had come to appreciate the robotic cleaning devices in her own time that she had always taken for granted. After washing windows and sweeping floors and dusting furniture all day, Isabelle knew she would never take them for granted again.

After a delicious, homecooked meal, Isabelle and Ruth sat down on the sofa to watch the six o'clock news on Ruth's small, primitive television.

Isabelle listened intently to the newscaster as he described the recent attempted break-in of Ethel Woodruff's house. It was believed to be connected with the murders of Ferne Jackson, aged 59, Florence Scheible, aged 89, Jean Dimenstein, aged 71, Martha Thurmond, aged 69, and Kathleen Woodruff, aged 74.

The women had all lived in the Wynnton area and had all been strangled with nylon stockings, except for Mrs. Kathleen Woodruff, who was strangled with a scarf.

An involuntary shiver slid up and down Isabelle's spine like a snake made of ice. Immediately, she excused herself and went to the guest room to get ready for bed.

Isabelle couldn't help but feel sorry for all of the poor, defenseless old women who had been ruthlessly murdered. Why did sweet Mrs. Schwob have to be attacked?

It wouldn't be too awful if she just warned Mrs. Schwob, would it? Isabelle knew that she couldn't say anything, but she thought it was unfair.

Suddenly, a new thought hit Isabelle. What if the strangler found her instead of Ruth? Although her mind was troubled, Isabelle's tired body allowed her to slip into a restless sleep.

Early in the morning, while the darkness was still complete, Isabelle awoke to the loud sounds of a violent struggle. Although she was scared stiff, she knew she couldn't just sit by and let Ruth be attacked.

She stealthily moved to the doorway, though her heart was beating so hard she thought it would come through her chest. Isabelle watched as Mrs. Schwob bravely fought off her attacker, knowing that the old woman was no match for the strong man.

With horror, Isabelle watched Ruth push the alarm box off of her night table in her attempt to push the button. That button was supposed to save her life! What would happen if she couldn't push it?

With sweat running off her hands and face, Isabelle edged her way into the room. Praying that the murderer wouldn't look up, Isabelle reached out and pushed the button hard.

She looked up at the huge man and noticed that he was barely holding onto the stockings that she needed. Slowly and cautiously, she reached out and grabbed for them. Her heart stopped for a split second as the attacker looked into her eyes.

Then, with the stockings clutched in her hand, she ran. Isabelle ran on and on, pursued by the relentless man. She ran faster than she'd ever run, out of the house, down the street, and to the clock tower, with the murderer coming closer and closer.

Chapter 10:

The Frozen Brew on the Santa Maria

"Ladies and gentlemen," Dr. Brewbaker began. "As you know, earlier today there were some rather unfortunate problems with the contents of the time capsule."

A murmur rose through the crowd in agreement.

"Well, to be perfectly honest with you, I know exactly what happened. Being frozen has its advantages; I now possess all knowledge of time -- past, present, and future. The contents of the time capsule disappeared back to their original time period. As for the students, I have sent them into the past in order to retrieve the lost objects."

The crowd fell into a hushed silence. Blank stares of disbelief and confusion swept over the faces of men, women, children.

Dr. Brewbaker continued, "Should these seven students fail to return to the present with their missing objects, the very fabric of time would be severed, resulting in the eventual disappearance of everything around you.

"Because of my privilege, I can tell you that all the students have successfully recaptured their artifacts. The only problem lies in the fact that the atomic energy which warped the artifacts into the past and allowed the students to mentally deliver their physical bodies into the past does not contain sufficient power to reach them through the space/time continuum."

The mother of Isabelle Hanes stood from her seat, screamed in fright, then promptly fainted. Similar reactions followed from family members of the other students.

"Now, now folks, there is no need for hysteria. If you would keep in mind that I have all knowledge of time--and its happenings--at my fingertips," said Dr. Brewbaker to calm the crowd.

"As I was saying, the atomic energy of the tower cannot reach them, but there happens to be another method of travel I hoped to introduce at my awakening anyway. I'm sure that you all noticed the rather large galleria on your right before entering Student Center. I'm quite surprised no one found it odd that it was named the "Santa Maria." Though it does serve as a galleria, the "Santa Maria" is a space vessel capable of making the leap through the space/time continuum."

The crowd gasped in unison.

"Dr. Brewbaker, I'm sure that in your time you were a respected man," Spencer Norwood, Sr. started. "However, this is a completely different time period. All this mumbo jumbo about time travel may be true. Quite frankly, though, I don't care.

"I'm from the old school where we were satisfied with travelling to Mars and Pluto. I'm giving you two hours on behalf of myself and all these other parents to produce our children before I go the police with charges of kidnapping."

The parents mumbled their approval as Dr. Brewbaker gazed into the gathering with shock. Minutes after, the parents had migrated into the Davidson Student Complex, Dr. Brewbaker remained at the podium contemplating his plan of action. Fortunately he had organized a basic plan in mind, when he first became aware of this minor problem during his less-than-active period in life.

Dr. Brewbaker solemnly made his way to the "Santa Maria." He had never been extremely comfortable with the idea of traipsing through the past. He entered

the captain's cabin and programmed the time location to six o'clock a.m., February 11, 1978.

"I should arrive in plenty of time to prevent Carlton Gary from making Isabelle Hanes into another victim," Dr. Brewbaker thought to himself.

He started the atomic time search mechanism and prayed that the students had not suddenly decided to rewrite history. The consequences could be the erasure the future.

Generations earlier, Isabelle Hanes found herself standing at Wynnton Elementary School. It seemed only moments before she had seen Carlton Gary kill a woman, and here she stood with one of his stockings waiting for transportation back to the future, back to her time.

When is it coming? she thought to herself. The truth was, she had no idea what was coming to transport her. She only knew that it had better arrive before Carlton Gary did, for she knew he was after her. Little did she know how close he actually was.

"Hello little lady," an all too familiar voice began. "What's a fine young miss doing out in the Wynnton area at six o'clock in the morning?" Isabelle froze with terror. Her worst fear had come true; Gary had arrived before her ticket to safety. Something he said kept repeating itself over and over in her head; she could almost hear it.

"Of course!" she shouted out loud as the thunderous roar of the new "Santa Maria," the flagship of the University of Georgia at Columbus, appeared overhead.

Six o'clock had been the exact time she was to leave the past. A ladder descended from the space ship as Carlton Gary fled in fear. Moments later Isabelle warped to the next rendezvous point with the stocking in hand. She hastily recounted the events of her expedition.

"Sandie, you know that I'm going to miss you don't you?" Kaegan asked.

"Yea, I know," Sandie sullenly replied. "You could stay if you wanted to. She turned her head and sighed deeply," Please don't make this any harder on me than it already is. I have to leave, I have to go home."

"Yeah, I know."

Kaegan reached into her pockets and pulled out the deck of Ma Beachie's marked cards. She felt sorry for the kindhearted whore standing by her side. She wished that there was some way to offer Sandie a better living. Sadly, Kaegan admitted to herself that to alter history would bring disastrous consequences.

At precisely 3:30 p.m., June 19, 1954, Kaegan Ashmore kissed her friend goodbye and boarded the "Santa Maria."

Dr. Brewbaker glanced down at his watch as he programmed the coordinates June 23, 1867, 6:23 p.m. He began to feel the pressure of the two hour time limit inflicted by the parents. With six people to go and only one and a half hours, he knew that he was going to have to hurry.

Seconds later the "Santa Maria" appeared over the skyline of the Church of the Holy Family. Dr. Brewbaker had been fortunate; the church had been in the same location since it was erected to replace the original Catholic church. A ladder descended and James Burns, journal entry in hand, climbed into what he knew must be his transportation home.

Tracy Brown stood before the cathedral-like church awaiting her trip home -- to 2058. The afternoon sun beat down on her neck. A thunderous roar appeared overhead, and Tracy clutched the cape from Boothe's costume. She boarded the vessel as frightened people hid inside buildings.

Dr. Brewbaker prepared the ship for a double day warp. Fortunately, the time and dates worked for him. John Fowler would be collected at 1:00 p.m., April 4, 1884, and Casey Walker would be at 7:05 p.m. April 4, 1925. Collecting the two this way was going to save him an extra ten to fifteen minutes, ten to fifteen minutes that he needed as leeway. Two minutes later, the skyline over Holy Family darkened dramatically as the double day warp was completed.

Alexis Burnham watched as a slow trickle of blood ran down her arm. The gold bobbin shone brightly in the afternoon sunlight. The shooting had shaken her more than she had realized, and she started to shiver. One minute later, at 4:00 p.m., the "Santa Maria" appeared once again over Holy Family. Alexis boarded the ship that now lacked only one more passenger.

Spencer Norwood sat calmly on the steps of the Bradley Library. The events of the past days had changed him drastically. He wished to return home and make amends with all of his friends. Before they had all called him a snob. Now he understood why. Now it would be different. A clock chimed 5:00 in the distant and the "Santa Maria" claimed its last passenger.

"And so you see, ladies and gentleman, all of your children are here before you safe and sound, their artifacts intact, and the world safe," Dr. Brewbaker said as he began his closing speech. "You gave me two hours and I complied. I cannot dictate whether or not you will believe me or your children. However, I trust that you will all have open minds and one day tell others this magnificent tale and keep alive the heroic deeds of these fine young students."